

Mainstream Early Childhood Teachers and their Understandings of Pacific Education.

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Abstract

This research explores the views of eight mainstream early childhood teachers and their understandings of Pacific education. Pacific children in education continue to fall within the underachievement statistics in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This has remained of consistent concern over several decades. The Government has put into effect strategies specifically targeted towards Pacific children in education to try and change this. Considerable pressure has been placed on teachers to ensure accountability within their teaching practice, to prove they are providing the quality education necessary for Pacific children to succeed. The methodology I use to gather information is qualitative, with the use of semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the voices of mainstream teachers to be captured and heard. It also allowed me to gain insight into their ideas and thoughts on quality for Pacific children as well as the very real challenges faced in their practice with Pacific children in early childhood education. The findings indicated the need for relevant and continued professional development to ensure teachers were supported in their practice within the area of Pacific education. The findings also indicated a lack of confidence in mainstream early childhood teachers in the area of Pacific education. This led to teachers having a dependence on Pacific teachers and perceiving Pacific teachers as the only answer to be able to provide the quality needed for Pacific children. In conclusion, the findings indicated the need for teachers to examine their ideas of quality for Pacific children and to move beyond basic understandings of Pacific children and people to be truly effective in their teaching practice to support the learning and development of Pacific children today.

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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.

Jasmin Jattan

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In accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), the final ethics approval for this research project was granted on 12 November 2013 (Ethics Approval Number 13/320).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter I will discuss my personal journey and how I came to choose this specific topic. This is followed by contextualising Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The background of early childhood education is discussed as well as the structure of my thesis, concluding with a summary of this chapter. It has been convenient to use blanket terms for Pacific peoples such as Pasifika and Pacific Islander, within Government documentation to identify those from the various Pacific Islands such as Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands. Unfortunately these blanket terms tends to mask the many distinct and unique cultural histories and values of each Pacific nation. Failure to acknowledge this can lead to silencing the diversity of each cultural group. For the purpose of this thesis the term Pacific Peoples refers to the various Pacific Islands such as Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands.

1.2 CONTEXT: **PACIFIC PEOPLES IN NEW ZEALAND**

Significant numbers of Pacific Peoples migrated to New Zealand in the early 1950s. Post World War II saw labour shortages, leading to immigration policies encouraging Pacific Peoples to migrate to New Zealand for employment. Since then the Pacific population has increased at great speed with further Pacific Peoples migrating to New Zealand for better opportunities and a better life for their children and themselves. The rising population of Pacific peoples migrated from various Pacific islands during the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1970s and 1980s both migration and internal growth were factors that contributed to the rising population in Aotearoa New Zealand (MacPherson, 2004). Unfortunately labels such as Pacific Peoples allows one to view the distinct islands as one group. This view is one in which “Pacific Peoples are marginalised” (Baker, 2001, p. 43). It gives the view that all Pacific Peoples are the same when in fact there are distinct differences of language, cultural values, beliefs, and traditions.

Internationally research shows that wherever colonisation has occurred indigenous people underachieve educationally. (Saleem & Rizvi, 2011; Wotherspoon, 2014).

Current statistics show that Pacific children are also underachieving and have been for some time (Nash, 2000; Perrot, 2015; Teisina, 2011; Thaman, 1997). There is much more literature from which to draw from which highlights the under achievement gaps and educational hardships of Māori, Tangata whenua or people of the land (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu & Finau, 2002; Sheriff, 2010; Te One, 2013; Toso, 2011; Williams, Broadley & Te Aho, 2012). Throughout history their struggles within the education system have been noted and documented, with many Government initiatives seeking to enhance achievement of Māori students.

Like Māori, Pacific groups within Aotearoa New Zealand have begun to speak out for a better education system that will support them in their desires to achieve within education whilst reaching their aspirations to further their goals and hold strong to the values that underpin their cultures.

The educational history of Aotearoa New Zealand has been dominated by systems of European values and control, despite efforts, little change has occurred (Hindmarsh, 2005). Horsley and Walker (2005) describe Pacific Peoples as traditionally having a holistic approach to learning and development. This learning includes those values of compassion and love and that knowledge gained is for the “benefit of their families and communities” (p. 335). These values continue to remain vital to the core of Pacific values in education yet are usually neglected within the western dominated education systems. Thaman (2003) proposes a challenge in reflecting back upon the western ideologies and pedagogies in education that have sought to eliminate Pacific values and knowledges within education. She discusses the importance of reclaiming indigenous wisdom and knowledges and being aware of the impact of dominant western influences upon education that has shaped many of our views and beliefs. With continuing growth in numbers of Pacific children and families in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is necessary now more than ever for mainstream teachers to be aware of their personal perceptions, beliefs, and also long held views in education towards Pacific children.

Pacific Peoples were amongst minority groups who have begun to voice their struggles within the education system. According to Statistics New Zealand (2001), Pacific Peoples are growing at a fast rate and by 2051, one in five students will be of Pacific heritage. With the government recognising the growing Pacific population within Aotearoa New Zealand, the need for quality early childhood education is imperative.

Initiatives have been put in place to ensure Pacific people are receiving quality education and the support needed to ensure the under achievement gap is closed. The Pasifika Education Plan (2013-2017) (Ministry of Education, 2013) is one such initiative aimed at improving outcomes for Pacific families. This involves a community of accountability particularly for teachers, who are at the very forefront of educating Pacific children. Teachers need to ensure they are providing a standard and quality of education required for Pacific children to succeed and get the best from their educational experiences. Under the current national education system, Pacific children are categorised “priority learners” (Education Review Office, 2012, p. 4).

Therefore, the Ministry of Education reviews teachers’ practices and takes a particular interest in how teachers are working in the best interests of Pacific children. Early childhood education sets a foundation of confidence and a positive outlook, to enable a lifetime of learning for young children (Ministry of Education, 1996), so it is imperative that consideration be given to understandings and beliefs regarding what consists of quality education for Pacific children.

1.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The early childhood education sector has undergone tremendous changes in Aotearoa New Zealand from its first inception, in our colonial period, in the late 1890s with efforts to remove children from the streets (May, 2002). Early nineteenth and twentieth century initiatives were concerned with mainly Pākehā children (Walker & France, 2007). Later in the 1980s, changes occurred with the transfer of childcare from Social Welfare to the Department of Education. Following this was the introduction of three-year training programmes for early childhood teachers which was incorporated into primary teachers’ training colleges (Walker & France, 2007).

In line with Government agendas and aspirations, educational policies throughout the years have been produced to address both social and economic issues arising within society. An example of this was the introduction of the policy *Pathways to the Future: Ngā huaraki Arataki 2002-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2002) in response to the growing concern and voices of equity and funding issues in early childhood education, as well as quality and participation (May & Mitchell, 2009). Historically, changes made within the early childhood sector reflect the changing perceptions and political opinions of society (May, 2002).

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, the early childhood sector has a diverse range of services offered to families, such as kindergartens, playcentres and education care centres that offer services for children from birth to school age, as well as various Pacific language immersion centres and Kohanga Reo. Kindergartens emerged in the late eighteenth century as “charitable kindergartens for the colonial urban poor” (May, 2002, p. 20). Three key beliefs define kindergartens;

1. Fees not being charged for children’s attendance, although voluntary donations can be requested.
2. The kindergartens maintain fully qualified and registered teachers
3. Parents volunteer their time within the services, to assist with various aspects of running the service, such as with fundraising. (Bushouse, 2009).

Playcentres are unique to the early childhood education sector as they are parent led. They are managed and supervised solely by parents with support from “association and federation personnel” (Bushouse, 2009, p. 6). Playcentre was birthed in 1941 and its philosophy includes that of parents as educators, as well as being play based and child initiated (Manning, 2008). Home based care consists of an educator providing care and education at the caregiver’s home with the support and advice of a registered teacher who visits usually monthly. This can be either on a full or part time basis and is “part of a chartered home based care network” (Bushouse, 2009, p. 11). In recent years, home-based care networks have grown significantly. In 2015 a total of 417 licensed homebased care services were available nationwide. This has grown from 180 in the year 2000 (Education Counts, 2016).

Early education and care centres are currently among the fastest growing services of early childhood education today. Between the years of 2000 to 2015, education and care services increased from 1472 services to 2427 licensed services (Education Counts, 2016). Early education and care centres’ beginnings arose from much needed care/supervision for children of mothers who needed to work (Bushouse, 2009). As the number of women returning to the workplace rose, early education and care centres continued to increase in numbers to cater to this need for full day care provision, rather than the sessional times provided by kindergartens and playcentres. Early education and care centres “offer sessional, full day or flexible hour programmes for children from birth age to school” (Bushouse, 2009, p. 7).

Despite the first kindergartens operating in 1889, it was evident that the Māori child was largely invisible within these places of care. “It was not until the post WWII years that the Māori (child) was seen as a priority” (Walker & France, 2007). Kohanga reo (language nests) emerged in the 1980s “born at a National meeting of Māori tribal leaders” (Meade & Podmore, 2002, p. 12). The main purposes of Kohanga reo remain today, ensuring the survival of the language te reo Māori and to preserve the culture as well as honouring the Treaty of Waitangi (Bushouse, 2009). During the 1970s and 1980s concern arose from Māori that the playcentres and kindergartens were not meeting the needs of Māori children. There was a desire from Māori to ensure Māori families were empowered and had a right to an education that would meet the needs of Māori families and children. Bishop and Glynn (1999) note that “Māori wanted more control over the education of their children” (p. 75). According to Te One (2013) “the education system was seen to be unresponsive to the needs of the community and failed to deliver social and educational equity” (p. 8).

In the following years, the number of Kohanga Reo centres grew rapidly and by 1988 there were 540 centres (Macartney, 2011). The rapid growth of Kohanga Reo centres signalled the strong drive Māori had to ensure the revitalisation of their language and culture as well as taking back control over their own destiny. At its core, Kohanga Reo centres operate according to basic Māori principles, practices, and values where Māori have control over the content and context within these initiatives (Consedine & Consedine, 2012). Equally, Pacific Peoples can also identify with this desire to retain their cultural values and language. This can be seen with the establishment of various Pacific Language Nests throughout New Zealand. According to a report by the Ministry of Education, Education Counts (2016) there were 73 education and care centres that were classified as Pasifika early childhood and care centres. Since the mid-1980s, Pacific groups have been actively establishing early childhood services for Pacific people. The establishment of Kohanga Reo “provided a model for Pasifika people to follow (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 5). Similar to Māori, Pacific early childhood and care centres arose from the desire of Pacific people to maintain and retain their languages and culture. “Many of the women who began our language groups and centres did so because of their desire to pass on our Pacific languages and cultures that we had brought with us from our home island nations” (Mara, 2005, p. 7).

The 1980s saw a shift in the way in which early childcare was viewed and growing concerns for equity became voiced, but now the state was faced with catering to the growing diverse minority groups such as Pacific. The Meade Report (Meade and Podmore, 2002) in 1988 expressed the need for more involvement of families and inclusion for all, making some progress towards ensuring equitable outcomes for all children. Teisina (2011) pointed out that Pacific Peoples face a multitude of problems in New Zealand today, such as being in the lowest socio-economic group and having low academic achievements in education. The response of Pacific people to this has been to voice their own aspirations and find ways of maintaining their cultural identity.

Within this research, six of the participants were based in kindergartens and two were from early education care centres and all were located in the South Auckland area, which is a distinct area of Auckland New Zealand. Included in South Auckland is the low socio-economic suburbs of the former Manukau City, Otara, Papatoetoe, Mangere and Manurewa. The title South Auckland, specific to the aforementioned suburbs, has negative connotations associated with crime and the socially disadvantaged. Within South Auckland are a large number of state houses and some of the poorest suburbs of Auckland. According to the 2001 Census, Manukau has the largest number of people from Pacific heritage in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

It is necessary to acknowledge the struggles of the indigenous people, the Māori. There were on-going efforts for recognition of both their language and culture, which were in danger of being lost due to the impact of colonisation (Ritchie, 2008). These effects are still being felt today, despite strategies and a curriculum which has the intention of incorporating Māori language and culture into early childhood practice. Teachers find implementing the bicultural curriculum a challenge (Jenkin, 2010; Williams et al., 2012).

Similarly, Pacific Peoples have expressed the same desire to maintain and ensure their cultural values and aspirations are not lost. Education had only been based upon Western ideals, theories and philosophies, thus having an impact on education for Māori children. In the same way, Pacific People are being impacted and continue to advocate for quality within their Pasifika early childhood centres as well as for quality education for Pacific children.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The focus of this research was to look at mainstream early childhood teachers and their understanding of Pacific education. It was to explore teachers' views and understanding of providing quality early childhood education for Pacific children. I wanted to ascertain how different teachers did this through their practice and their understandings of quality education for Pacific children. I also wanted to consider challenges within their practice and how this impacted on the teaching and learning environment of the Pacific child. The guiding research question was:

What are your own understandings and practices for quality education with Pacific children?

Raths (2001) discussed the importance of teacher beliefs and how they can have a direct influence on students. These are beliefs that teachers acquire throughout their own educational and personal experiences. They can become rigid and deeply ingrained in their thoughts. It can become a significant challenge to change long held views and accept or be open to new views.

Lee (2010) also notes that in regard to views on diversity, early childhood teachers' values, beliefs, and knowledge are closely connected to their practice. She notes the importance of the "child being fully understood in their connection to their own background, culture and history" (p. 30). Further to this she encourages that teachers are fully aware of their own beliefs and are able to "adjust their teaching practices in consideration to, in this instance, the Pacific child's knowledge and experiences" (p. 30).

1.5 MY PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND JOURNEY

I was born in Wellington, New Zealand to an Indian father and a Samoan mother. The second eldest in a family of four, with the adoption of my two cousins, meant a family of six children. I have many wonderful memories of my childhood. Being from two very different but strong cultures was never really an issue for me. I knew these two worlds and lived in them happily alongside my siblings as well as my many cousins. Aunties and uncles were significant in my upbringing and played major roles in how I was raised. There was a merging of two cultures at every gathering where my Samoan and Indian families would come together as one.

The start of my primary school education brought painful experiences as I didn't know how to identify myself within this new environment. Especially with regard to my identity and heritage. I struggled with the work given to me and did not have a good understanding of how to do it, unlike my peers. This struggle continued well into college and university, which at the time I decided to leave to pursue other interests.

From my experiences in primary school and college, I had decided that I just did not have the potential to achieve, which had a huge impact on my self-esteem and motivation to achieve academically. I remember not being interested in classes, mainly because I could not relate to or even understand much of what the teachers taught. As a result, school became a boring place and I dreaded having to go. Despite being born in New Zealand, before entering primary school the two cultures I was immersed in, was all I knew. Primary school was a completely different world. It was one of the first places I developed an unhealthy outlook on my potential to succeed in education. This set the scene for my remaining years in schooling and resulted in a lack of interest and negative mind-set about education, which followed me for many years to come.

Without a doubt, the biggest influence in my early years came from my Samoan aunt, who played a significant role in raising me. Her love for my siblings and I were my most memorable moments in childhood. Being a young lady with the responsibility of many young children including her own, was very hard work. Both my own parents worked extremely hard to ensure we were clothed, fed and could get good education options. However, as a result of them working hard to support and raise not only their own children but many other family members, their time and commitment meant that they were not always able to be present. Their hard work and sacrifice for our family will always be remembered. They were not only supporting us, but the many uncles and aunties and their families who had migrated to New Zealand for a better life. This meant that the house was often chaotic and filled with many people. So there were many instances where I would choose to stay with my aunt. My aunt was very much immersed in her Samoan culture and I remember attending church services alongside her, where Samoan language would be spoken. Although I did not know the language, I felt very safe and happy to play and cause havoc alongside my Samoan cousins and others. Continuing on my journey in childhood, my aunt being a single parent for many years committed to attaining her diploma in early childhood education. Despite the hard work, she was able to achieve this for herself and still ensure that she cared for all of us.

It was many years later after completing my diploma in beauty therapy that I would visit her at her kindergarten. It was at this point in my life that I was at a juncture, not really knowing what the next step would be. As I watched my aunt interact and care for all these beautiful children in her centre, I was immediately taken back to my own childhood of happy memories with her. I reflected on how lucky these children were to have such a kind and loving teacher, because I knew first hand that my aunt was an amazing woman. It caused me to reflect back to my own educational experiences and sadly there was no joy or happy educational experiences. There were only memories of frustration, intimidating teachers and disappointment. This reflection unknowingly was to be the beginning of a journey that has brought me to where I am today.

With the encouragement of my mother and family to go back to university to complete my studies, I decided upon education. My intention was to become a primary school teacher. What had occurred in that moment of reflection instilled a desire in me to ensure that children had positive and warm educational experiences. I realised as a teacher I could have influence in ensuring that children did not fall through the gap like I did. I could be that positive influence to children who needed it, like I once did. In the midst of completing my degree, I became a mother to my daughter Jarrah. Becoming a mother changed everything. As any mother would. I wanted the very best for my child and for her to grow up surrounded by love and to live her life to the fullest potential. I became fascinated with the way in which she was learning and growing. It was at this point that I decided to focus on early childhood education instead of primary school teaching. I had the desire to spend as much time with my daughter as possible as well as learn more about the ways in which children learn and develop.

After graduating and receiving my degree at the University of Auckland, I began my journey as a teacher in early childhood education. Many of my experiences were in the South Auckland area with a large majority of children being of Pacific and Māori heritage. It was an interesting experience to work with others and observe and reflect upon the many differing types of practice. Perhaps most frustrating to me, was hearing the strong opinions from many teachers over my years of teaching about Pacific and Māori children. Many did not have an understanding of the culture of the children present and as a result many negative stereotypical views were voiced during my daily work experiences.

However, it was at these centres in South Auckland, that I had the opportunity to meet many amazing Pacific families. I personally found that it was easy to interact with them and learn about their stories and struggles as well as their aspirations for their children. I would notice that the relationship I had with Pacific families was usually warm and that they were very open to sharing their time and company with me and my colleague at the time, who was of Māori heritage. However, my other colleagues, who were not of Māori or Pacific heritage, seemed to find it difficult to form close relationships, connect positively and network with the Pacific community easily.

Despite being only part Samoan, the values and experiences I grew up with were of cultures different to mainstream with my Samoan aunt being especially significant. These values of love, family and faith were instilled in me and I recognised them in the many Pacific families I encountered. When I looked at the many Pacific children at my centre, I could see myself in many of them, I could identify with their experiences and cultural values.

It became more important to me to ensure Pacific children were receiving the quality education they needed and deserved to succeed as well as correcting the misconceptions and ideas others may have formed about them. My aspiration to achieve this led me to complete my post graduate diploma and consequently my current journey of completing my master's degree. It is throughout this journey, that I have come to be more aware of the political and social influences that can have a considerable impact on education.

This has challenged my own thinking and belief systems and the impact of these to the education environment. It has also made me more aware of how such beliefs can influence and impact my teaching practices. Equally importantly, is my own self growth. It is this journey of completing my qualification which has given me a better understanding of why I faced such difficulty with mainstream education and the need to do something about it.

1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

Eight early childhood teachers from centres in South Auckland were recruited as participants. During my time as an early childhood teacher, I was able to build up my own personal network of early childhood teachers.

Six of these teachers worked within the same association as I did, but not in the same centres, so I was able to approach each participant directly and talk to them in depth about the research and ask if they would like to participate. The other two participants I had met previously through professional development opportunities.

Two of the participants were of Pacific heritage and both spoke the languages of their culture, five were of New Zealand European heritage and one was of Chinese heritage. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and recorded by Dictaphone. The data were then transcribed and analysed to identify emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

1.7 KEY FINDINGS

This research showed three key themes in regard to mainstream early childhood teachers and their understandings of Pacific early childhood education. These were:

- The teachers having an understanding of the importance of professional development to their practice and expressing the need for more support in this area to aid them in working with Pacific children.
- The majority of teachers agreed that there was a lack of Pacific teachers within this sector and believed a Pacific teacher in each centre would be ideal.
- The idea of quality from the majority of teachers was providing resources and displays for Pacific children and families in their centre, so as to establish a place of belonging and inclusion for Pacific children and their families.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This chapter gives an overview of this study and discusses my own personal journey as well as the focus of the research.

Chapter two provides a review of both international and local literature which focusses on the history of education in New Zealand as well as the struggles faced by Māori which proves to be a similar struggle for Pacific children. The national curriculum for early childhood education is discussed, as are some of the challenges *Te Whariki* (Ministry Of Education, 1996), brings for minority groups and Pacific children.

The idea of quality is explored in the literature, and what quality is according to Pacific Peoples' views. The importance and necessity of professional development is also considered as is its impact on teachers.

Chapter three outlines the research approach used and the methods associated with this research. The selection of participants, data collection and data analysis are also discussed. Ethical considerations relevant to the research are outlined as well as the strengths, limitations, and challenges of the research.

In Chapter four, the findings of the research are presented and I will discuss and substantiate key findings using the appropriate literature.

The concluding chapter will give an overview of the research and revisit the research question, as well as discuss the strengths and limitations of this research. The contribution of this research is offered as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Alongside Māori children, Pacific children have been placed in the underachievement category in education within New Zealand. According to Statistics New Zealand (2010), the growing Pacific population largely consists of young people. By 2051 New Zealand's student population will consist of one in five students being of Pacific descent (Statistics New Zealand 2010). As a result this has meant that the government needs to make sure strategies are put in place to ensure quality education is being provided to all Pacific children.

Within this review, I will bring together literature that looks at four important aspects with the education of Pacific children in early childhood education:

1. Government Strategies
2. *Te Whāriki*
3. Quality for Pacific children
4. Appropriate Professional Development for Teachers (To provide for Pacific children).

The review of literature looks at Government strategies that support the education of Pacific children and the impact of those strategies for teachers. *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) the national and first ever bicultural and bilingual early childhood curriculum is explored and considers what is offered within the document that addresses the needs of Pacific children, families and other communities.

The growing Pacific population makes it imperative that teachers deliver quality education for Pacific children, however, this idea of quality has long been contested (Farquar, 1993; Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Pascall & Bertram, 1994; Pau'uvala, 2011; Penn, 2011). What quality means for one may not necessarily mean quality for another. The literature compiled explores the idea of quality and what it may look like for Pacific people. Lastly, the literature will look at the importance and necessity of professional development for teachers.

There has been much said about the complex challenges teachers face in their current roles in education. Grey (2011) discusses the issues of time constraints upon early childhood teachers and Edwards and Nuttall (2016) report the increasing demands upon teachers in ensuring an appropriate knowledge base and their ability to effectively tackle the complexities diversity brings into classrooms. Government initiatives aimed at lifting achievement in education for Pacific students, means teachers are expected to have the skills necessary to ensure successful implementation of such initiatives and strategies.

Alvestad, Duncan and Burge (2009), bring attention to some of the challenges teachers face in implementing *Te Whāriki* as well as pedagogical practice. Teachers bring to the profession personal values and experiences and these will have an impact upon practice. The literature aims to bring together what has been discussed about the importance of professional development and why it is so necessary when educating our Pacific children.

2.1 GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

As discussed in the introductory chapter, there is a danger in the Government use of the convenient blanket term Pacific Peoples to group together the unique and distinct groups that are actually present from each island (Samu, Mara & Siteine 2008). This can cause considerable challenges because such terms can contribute to teachers' misunderstandings and perceptions towards Pacific children and families in their centres. It becomes quite easy to begin to perceive Pacific Peoples as one and the same with the same needs and values. In taking this perspective, it is easy for educators to use a "one size fits all" strategy towards Pacific people and in doing so, do a disservice to the uniqueness of each Pacific group and dismiss or overlook specific cultural needs, values and paradigms.

Furthermore, there is the added tension concerning the evolving identities of a younger generation. Pacific Peoples born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, who have formed their own unique identities may not necessarily share cultural practices or values of those who are Island born. This point is highlighted by Samu et al., (2008) who also recognises the multiple realities and experiences of Pacific people.

The Pacific Strategy 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013) is one such plan presented for Pacific children and families with the strategic direction of the government committed to ensuring more successful educational outcomes for Pacific children. The plan states “It is one of the government’s key strategies that will contribute to economic growth and social well-being” (Educational Review Office, 2012, p. 1). The strategy included goals, targets, and actions that are focused on uplifting Pacific children’s educational rates. Within the strategy it was proposed that teachers and all those within the education sector will have responsibility to ensure that the Pacific strategy is being implemented effectively. The expectation is that there will be an increase in participation, engagement, and success in education for Pacific children.

Increased accountability has led to growing pressure for teachers to report upon the various strategies and the progress they have made in delivering quality education for Pacific children. The Education Review Office (ERO) monitors the ways in which teachers are meeting these goals for children. Within ERO’s review structure, Pacific children are identified under the heading of priority learners. ERO requires that early childhood teacher’s use their knowledge and understanding of Pacific children to ensure relevant experiences contribute to the child’s success (Education Review Office, 2013). Currently in early childhood centres, ERO will specifically ask teachers to discuss and show evidence of their effectiveness of their teaching strategies with their Pacific children who are classified as “at risk” within the centre. ERO’s intention is to explore the ways in which teachers are responding to and recognising Pacific children’s identities, language and culture (Education Review Office, 2013). It is the teachers’ responsibility to be able to explain and justify their strategies in order for ERO to be able to “tick” the appropriate boxes as a way of measuring teacher’s accountability towards these goals of the government for Pacific children. Despite there being some progress through government initiatives, such as improved access to early childhood education for Pasifika families and greater participation, there is still much work required in being able to ensure adequate success rates that impact on Pacific children.

Jeurissen (2005) points out the continued failure in the education system regarding minority groups. She discusses teachers feeling pressure over the demands of the curriculum at Primary level and the “need to address individual learning needs of their students” (Jeurissen, 2005, p. 9).

2.2 TE WHĀRIKI

The introduction of the bicultural early childhood education curriculum, *Te Whāriki* in 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1996), set a new quality standard. It was the first bicultural and bilingual curriculum in the country and the world (Ritchie & Skerett, 2014). Seen as an effort to ensure an inclusive curriculum that acknowledged and affirmed the commitment to Māori and diverse learners. The curriculum states that it is founded upon the following aspirations for children “to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9).

Helen May and Margaret Carr were contracted as the leading writers of *Te Whāriki*. Consultation with specialist groups such as Pacific Island and Māori groups were undertaken over a fourteen month process to “recognise prevailing discourses on early childhood and all its diversity”(Te One, 2013, p. 16). In 1993 the draft presented to the Minister who had his own advisory group. It was not known who was on this group. However, the final version presented notable differences from the draft. “The major ones (differences) being the deletion of curricular developed by specialist working groups” (Te One, 2013, p.20). When comparing the draft of *Te Whāriki* to the curriculum we know and use today, specific and important examples and guidelines in supporting Pacific children and families are not present. This is quite unfortunate as teachers would have gained insightful knowledge with reference to Pacific children. Such an inclusion of support teacher practice. For example the Communication Strand states, “The language and symbols of their own and other cultures are present” (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 84). Following this is the consideration that the programmes should include the preservation and “revitalisation of traditional oral arts” (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 85). Teachers are well positioned to reflect on what these traditional oral arts may be. It is a starting point to consider how they might go about doing this or finding out this particular information.

However, the curriculum in its current form reflective questions are posed. In this instance, “what opportunities are there for oral story-telling and how effectively are these opportunities being used?” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 76).

There are many ways in which oral-storytelling can be incorporated into an early childhood programme, however, the specific importance of traditional oral arts to Pasifika children and their

families has been taken away through the simple re-wording and removal of examples in the content. Furthermore, links to important theory which gives further support to teachers and families has been removed.

The metaphor of the *whāriki* or mat is used to represent how the curriculum is viewed. It is a mat woven together using the principles, strands, and goals contained within the document. In acknowledging Pacific children, the curriculum recognises the many diversities that are present in early childhood centres. It places responsibility upon each service to ensure that “programs and resources are sensitive and responsive to the different cultures and heritages among the families of the children attending that service” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 18). Despite this ground breaking curriculum, implementing it has proved to be rather complex with a variety of debates and some criticism towards it (Blaklock, 2010; Cullen, 1995; Ritchie, 2002).

An evaluation report by the Education Review Office, discussed ongoing findings about the ways in which *Te Whāriki* is being used within early childhood centres. The report recognises that the implementation of *Te Whāriki* presented challenges and raised many questions. The report states:

On the one hand *Te Whāriki* enables services to adopt many different philosophical and pedagogical approaches to curriculum within the broad framework of principles and strands. On the other, it is evident that *Te Whāriki* can accommodate considerable variability in quality (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.16)

Te Whāriki being a curriculum that is non prescriptive and open to interpretation has meant that implementation concerns are reflected in the decisions and choices of early childhood teachers (Cullen, 1995). Given the diversification of early childhood education services with its varying philosophies and distinctive contexts, such aspects will have an impact on the way in which early childhood teachers interact with Pacific children and families.

Cherrington and Shuker (2012) examined diversity amongst New Zealand early childhood educators. They were interested in how issues of diversity are addressed within different services. Of particular attention was references made to languages spoken by educators in their particular services.

The use of languages other than English and Māori was limited, despite the ethnicities of educators reflecting a multicultural community. Furthermore this would be unlikely to change. It was noted that little attention was given to “teaching and learning practices that were inclusive of diverse children and families” (Cherrington & Shuckers, 2012, p. 87) In addition “inadequate access to language resources for children and adults” (p. 87). Such research has brought attention to the fact that early childhood educators were in danger of becoming too comfortable and familiar with the curriculum as a framework.

Becoming too comfortable with the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* can have a huge impact and lead to practice that is narrow, limiting and which presents no challenge. Blaiklock (2010) challenges teachers in their role as educators as having sole responsibility in being able to bring together children’s’ knowledge and understandings through their interactions. Teachers to have a deeper understanding of specific subject content knowledge and how best to support this in their engagements with children. A study conducted with New Zealand teachers and their understandings in regards to their planning and practice relating to *Te Whāriki*, discussed the teachers as having a heavy reliance on the principles and strands of the curriculum (Alvestad et al., 2009). They point out once again, the danger of repeating and reinforcing their own traditional practices.

Cullen (1995) suggested in her report on the challenges of implementing *Te Whāriki* was the “theoretical tension” (p. 8) present in the curriculum. She suggests this limitation is more likely intensified by a “weakness in the knowledge base and training of early childhood educators” (Cullen, 1995, p. 6). The report notes the theoretical foundations of *Te Whāriki*, was a change from the predominant underpinning early childhood programmes of developmental philosophy. This can be credited to the works of Swiss biologist and psychologist Jean Piaget. Piagetian theory with its focus on the different stages of development flourished in the 1960s and 1970s (Cullen, 1995). It is a developmental theory that rationalises “the process of coming to know and the stages we move through as we gradually acquire this ability” (Blake & Pope, 2008, p. 59).

Cullen (1995) states “while *Te Whāriki* also reflects recent perspectives on the early childhood curriculum which emphasize the importance of social and cultural contexts, its structure is essentially developmental” (p. 4). Within the curriculum, in harmony to developmental approaches, *Te Whāriki* is structured according to the age related concepts of infants, toddlers and young children.

It is important to be aware that many early childhood programmes echo those of the 1980s and early 1990s when the developmental discourse thrived (Sellers, 2013). Despite *Te Whāriki* opening many possibilities for making the curriculum relevant to children and their learning, it also presents challenges to thinking and speaking differently within the worlds of educational theory and practice (Sellers, 2013). The challenges become apparent when trying to articulate these opportunities in ways suitable to the differing cultural worlds of the teachers, children, families, and communities they are a part of (Sellers, 2013). Cullen (1995) notes that although the issue of culturally appropriate teaching for young children has in part been addressed through the emergence of Pacific Island Language Nests and the Kohanga Reo movement, the challenges apparent with minority groups remain. There is a strong need for more research and resources to effectively support educators in addressing these barriers.

Furthermore, Cullen (1995) states the theoretical tension apparent within *Te Whāriki* between developmental appropriateness and cultural appropriateness has a definite impact on early childhood teachers. Teachers that have more in depth understanding of the appropriate bodies of literature would be more able to bridge these differences. However, for the busy teacher, implementation of the curriculum would likely be limited by a superficial understanding of its logic and challenges in practice (Cullen, 1995).

Jenkin’s (2010) thesis focused on teachers in early childhood and their implementation of the bicultural aspects of the curriculum in their practice. Some issues evident from the research showed teachers lacked confidence in implementing bicultural aspects of the curriculum, as well as a fear of being perceived as tokenistic. Despite there being a generally positive approach in participating in professional development to enhance skills, there were considerable barriers that needed to be overcome.

Jenkin noted that a strong commitment to the bicultural curriculum was of high importance and added that having a team who were all strongly committed to this would be the best approach.

Ritchie's (2003) findings in early childhood teacher programmes noted that students supported the fact that there must be a "heartfelt commitment" to "want" to implement the bicultural aspects of the curriculum. Ritchie notes that teacher education programmes are "much wider and deeper than one of the mechanical technical process of preparing teachers with the requisite skills" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 3). Despite both pieces of research being focused on the bicultural curriculum, both raised teacher conflicts and issues that are relevant to Pacific children. My concern is that if teachers are still struggling in different ways to implement our bicultural curriculum, how much more difficult is it to be able to implement quality education to the many Pacific children present in their centres?

Recently some early childhood centres have been highlighted in the news as not providing quality care. The *New Zealand Herald* (Johnston, 2015) states that ERO has "red-flagged" 150 childcare services. This means that the measures by which ERO assess quality was found to be lacking and further reviews were to be undertaken. Mentioned among some of the most pressing issues were a lack of cultural response and also inadequate teacher knowledge of the curriculum.

Once again, the same issues appear such as inadequate teacher knowledge of diverse groups, and understandings of the curriculum. These have not been addressed despite government strategies to resolve these matters. Although *Te Whāriki* is noted for being the leading benchmark for quality in early childhood education in New Zealand, there are complexities in regards to implementing it effectively, as well as questions of quality for Pacific children in early childhood contexts.

2.3 QUALITY

The word "quality" has been a topic that has been widely argued and discussed. Within the various government initiatives in early childhood education, the word quality is constantly present.

The Ministry of Education (2016) on their website, dedicate a section on quality assurance in their education standards. A definition of quality by the *Oxford Dictionary* says it is “the standard of something as measured by other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something” (Oxford Dictionary, 2016).

Moss and Pence (1994) discuss quality as ever-changing and a reflection of “beliefs and values, needs and agenda’s influence and empowerment of various stakeholder groups having an interest in these services” (p. 1).

Quality is a word that has been highly overused. Early childcare education has not escaped the attention being given to the notion of quality.

Quality is generally understood as an attribute of services for young children that ensures the efficient production of predefined, normative outcomes, typically developmental or simple learning goals. Presence of quality is usually evaluated vis-à-vis expert-derived criteria, associated in research with achieving these outcomes (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p. 3).

Differing cultural values and ideals will certainly have a direct impact on one’s view of what quality means. Pau’uvale (2011) discussed the idea of quality in Tongan Language nests, raising the importance of educators having an in-depth understanding and connectedness to not only the Tongan culture, but also the language and epistemology. Her research notes the importance of using ways of constructing, organising, and using indigenous knowledge particular to the culture, which is deemed quality. She points out, “...the quality of education that our children are exposed to should be derived from Tongan culture and traditions” (p.5).

This view is supported by Kolone-Collins (2010). Her research on the pedagogical significance of *Fagogo* (Samoan stories at night), revealed the significance of deep and critical understandings of the Samoan language and values. Understanding of this is vital to teaching practices that could transform and improve the teaching and learning of Samoan children. Furthermore, Kolone-Collins believes that without analysis of the Samoan wisdom in educating Samoan children, attempts in educating them in Western ways, contribute to devaluing and dimming the minds of Samoan people. Both researchers (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Pau’uvale, 2011) discuss the significance of how each culture values learning in the education process.

The need for a radical educational rethinking discussed by Thaman (1997) argues that culture should be regarded as a foundation for education rather than an imperative variable within it.

Thaman discussed education being about people and that people have their unique histories that involve their ways of understanding and knowing the world in which they live. Included in these are the beliefs and values that have come from previous generations. She continues to say it is important that anyone involved in the education of Pacific Island peoples must recognise those beliefs and values and work towards education for cultural renewal rather than for assimilation or cultural extinction. Thaman also discussed the education experience for many Pacific people, is aimed at preparing them for the modern urban industrial sector or cash economy. Rather than supporting Pacific societies in their cultural renewal and survival, western education may have served to help in their cultural demise.

When looking closer at these ideas of rethinking education, Efi (2005) discusses the idea of clutter when looking at indigenous knowledge and history. In this case Efi uses the term clutter to illustrate the various influences such as Western democracy and global capitalism that a Pacific person has to sift through to be able to make sense of their indigenous knowledges and history. Efi discussed the traditional rituals as a record of their history. Dance was a way in which knowledge was transferred and captured significant events of importance to not only the family, but also the village and country. Dance is used as a tool for preserving one's history and continuing ethnic pride, both of which are important to personal development and identity formation. He stressed the importance of Pacific People looking at what they already have before going abroad to search for meaning and being surrounded by unnecessary clutter that can draw their focus away from what really matters. In this case the survival of their cultures and languages that brings meaning and a sense of belonging for them.

There is a fear that younger Tongan generations lose their cultural identities as they become more immersed in the dominant cultures of the new countries they migrate to (Teisina, 2011). If these are some of the complexities Pacific Peoples are being called to reflect upon, how much more challenging must it be for teachers of non-Pacific descent to be able to sift through the clutter of our Pacific people's histories and complexities of culture. Toso (2011) describes that throughout the years Māori accepted what was taught to them about their people, history, and culture. Furthermore, the knowledges taught have always been specifically selected by the dominant power groups in learning institutes. He describes information as being managed by higher institutes, thus contributing to a watered down version of Māori knowledges.

Pacific People are likely in danger of facing the same challenges and struggles. This is a reality that impacts upon teachers and those entering the teaching profession and it is imperative that teachers are aware of these realities.

The government has proposed quality early childhood education to improve educational outcomes for Pacific children categorized as priority learners. However, it is important to look closer at the quality proposed and within *Te Whāriki* and whether this quality is appropriate and beneficial for Pacific children. Perhaps most importantly, for those teachers that work in early childhood centres with Pacific children and families, more attention should be given to their own ideas of quality for Pacific children. Teachers need to be able to recognise the ways in which strategies within *Te Whāriki* can limit them in their practice if their own understandings and beliefs are not critically analysed. The issue of quality then becomes quite complex. Teachers must have a clear idea of whose idea of quality is being implemented when educating Pacific children.

The literature has brought to light the idea of quality for Pacific children as being one where there is a connectedness to the cultural ways of knowing and doing, and an in depth understanding of the Pacific ways of knowing and doing. To be truly effective in educating Pacific children successfully, teachers need better understandings of Pacific children to be more adequately prepared to handle this diversity. Increased participation may be the goal of the government in attempting to lift the achievement rates of Pacific children, however, the type of early childcare education they are accessing may not be contributing to positive outcomes in this area. Teachers must be committed to and critical of their practice and knowledge. Cooper and Hedges (2014) express the need for teachers to be able to enact culturally responsive teaching, on-going professional development and the capacity to reflect amongst other things is necessary.

2.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Darling-Hammond (2005, p. 237) state “In the global era, teachers must have the preparation and skills to teach students to the highest standards”. The government’s aim to improve educational outcomes for Pacific children include placing a high priority on professional development for teachers.

One of the targets identified within the Pasifika Education Plan outlines building Pasifika competencies throughout the education workforce through the development of a framework of Pasifika competencies for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2013).

With Auckland being the city with the largest Pacific population in the world (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2015) it is imperative that teachers today are able to ensure they are meeting the needs of the Pacific children and families in their centres. Professional development is an on-going journey and has no end if one is to be a competent and capable teacher. As education and society are constantly changing, teachers are at the heart of educational reforms and need to continually keep updated on their knowledge base and skills to be able to deliver the quality required and expected. Although within the context of the compulsory sector, the work of Allen, Taleni and Robertson (2009) addresses this very concern. They propose what it really means to “know” children for effective teaching to occur.

If 'knowing' includes having an understanding of the social and cultural contexts that shape our students' prior learning, social interactions and ability to achieve in the New Zealand education system, then we as teachers face a challenging task in our increasingly multicultural classrooms...The 'at risk' label frequently attached to our Māori and Pasifika students suggests that we are not yet achieving these aims effectively. (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009, p. 1)

The suggestion here is that teachers' understandings of Pacific children have remained a challenge as they continue to be over-represented in our underachievement statistics in education. Having the spotlight on Pacific children as priority learners in government policies could point to teachers having inadequate understandings of Pacific children and their families' cultures. Revealing ineffective strategies that could potentially do more harm than good.

Hedges (2012), conducted a study which looked at the ways in which teachers' own funds of knowledge such as their life experiences and understandings were a vital influence. This was more likely to be prioritised over theory and research in pedagogical decision making in their practice. Hedges describes the early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* as being a sociocultural document which is known internationally for its progressive and non-prescriptive base. Rather than focusing on knowledge outcomes, *Te Whāriki* focuses on the learning processes and orientations.

Because of its non-prescriptive nature, the curriculum is largely dependent on the teacher's knowledge and interpretations in day to day educational situations. The curriculum can be seen as only effective if teachers have a good knowledge base to bring to inform their decisions. Hedges also says that since early childhood education has quite an unstructured nature, teachers play a key role in making curriculum decisions. They bring a range of understandings and knowledge.

The importance of teachers' professional knowledge includes an understanding of theories of learning, early childhood philosophies and discourses and curricular and pedagogies applicable for young children (Hedges, 2012). She states that insightful knowledge about individual children, families and communities and cultures are needed. With New Zealand's growing Pacific population, it is more important for teachers to be able to have a good understanding of the ways in which their teaching pedagogies are influenced. To be able to recognise the ways in which their practice is influenced by their own personal life experiences and understandings. Hedges (2012) further to this contends also "...personal knowledge may be so entrenched that it can lead teachers to over-estimate the extent to which they have absorbed new ideas and concepts into their dialled in practices" (p. 19).

Similarly, in a study that looked at New Zealand teachers' understandings of their practice and educational planning in relation to *Te Whāriki*, Alvestad et al., (2009) described teachers are left to "weave their own Whāriki (mat)" (p. 5). Indeed a challenging task if the teachers' knowledge and understanding of Pacific children is limited. This becomes intensified if deficit perceptions are held without justification or critical analysis. Hence, necessary for teachers to be reflective in their practice. They require the ability to honestly critique their own beliefs and recognise the impact their own experiences will have on their practice.

With reference to indigenous cultures and the lenses by which western researchers perceive education, Smith (1999) maintains,

It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and nations. (Smith, 1999, p. 77)

Smith (1999) draws attention to the way in which research conducted in the past produced unfavourable outcomes towards indigenous cultures and continues to be deeply embedded in educational systems today. Educators need to examine their current teaching pedagogies and practices in light of the work they do with Pacific children, their families and communities.

Educators' deficit beliefs and assumptions regarding Pacific students shapes their understandings of them and impacts upon their learning negatively within the classroom context (Spiller, 2012). Educators would often attribute poor behaviour from Pacific students to their Pacific values. "Teacher beliefs about Pasifika students' values determined the teaching strategies they used with those students" (Spiller, 2012, p. 62). Examples given were Pacific students not asking questions within the classroom, with this being linked to a teachers' assumption of Pacific children not being part of decision making within their homes. Spiller's (2012) study points to teachers' beliefs about their Pacific students hindering their progress in school.

Leauepe (2010) in her research looked at the views of Tongan and Samoan early childhood teachers' views of play are critical to understanding what Pacific families' value as learning and therefore quality. Her research showed that Western theories of play favour and dominate early childhood philosophies. Consideration of differing cultures and their ideas of play. Her research brings to light the conflicting views of play and how understandings and experiences have had an impact. It is these types of understandings that should be more closely examined and taken into account when trying to understand the Pacific child, families and communities

Howard (2010) and her work in addressing multi-ethnic societies teaching workforce is useful to understanding the nature and "complexities surrounding this topic. She contends "complexities within the perceived outcomes for increased teacher diversity from the study should be further investigated and discussed" (p.6). It is important to prepare teachers to be able to work effectively with children from diverse cultural backgrounds (Howard, 2010). However, pre-service training in itself is not enough to prime teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms. Howard (2010) further states that in-service professional development should also be given to teachers already in teaching, to ensure they are well skilled in teaching practices that support a culturally inclusive classroom.

Kane and Fontaine (2008) discuss findings from their research with new graduates entering the teaching profession. A majority of them felt least prepared in regards to aspects of understanding, knowledge and pedagogical practice relating to inclusion and support for Māori students in the classroom. This does raise important questions about teacher preparation programmes. If research is giving voice to the challenges to teachers with Māori students, we need to be looking at how the realities of these challenges by teachers are being addressed and how these same challenges apply to our Pacific children.

Currently there have been changes made in Initial Teacher Education. Many have included Pacific Education as part of these qualifications. The Auckland University of Technology includes the opportunity for early childhood education and primary students to specialise in Pacific Education in their final year (3rd year) of working toward their qualification for the Bachelor of Education. 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 Talanoa Lalanga where all 21 papers are derived from teaching and promoting our Pasifika languages, cultures and knowledges. However, the Pasifika degree is finishing 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. In students' final year, they can specialise in Pasifika Education by taking two Pasifika papers. .

Despite teachers having a good understanding of the importance of diversity, meeting the needs of Pacific children is not as simple as has been seen with implementing a bicultural curriculum. Hedges and Lee (2010) bring consideration to student teachers' preparation regarding partnerships with parents and families. They note the importance of students having community placements as these are effective in allowing them to step outside their comfort zone and build upon their knowledge of diverse families. It also allows students to engage in meaningful reflective practice which is necessary, as teachers must be able to reflect upon their beliefs and the dominant discourses present in their practice. Currently Hedges and Lee (2010) describe the preparation of student teachers for partnerships with parents as "inadequate" (p. 257).

The 10-year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education (Ministry of Education, 2002) proposed that quality education and care could be achieved through qualified teachers. The plan makes explicit “many ECE teachers in New Zealand are not qualified, yet there is a strong correlation between quality ECE and teacher qualifications” (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 8). Under a National led government, the requirement within early childhood education changed. Whilst the Labour party had proposed a target of having 100 percent qualified teachers in teacher led services by 2012, the National government does not share that same vision. As a result, the requirement for 100 percent qualified teachers was dropped to the requirement that only 50 percent of staff for under two’s were qualified within teacher led services. The necessity for qualifications was eroded thus undermining the professionalism of this sector. In recent years there has been a rise in early childhood education centres. However, with centres only requiring 80 percent qualified staff, this raises important questions about quality versus quantity. Pacific children are being encouraged to participate in early childhood education, however, the quality of that education is questionable.

A research report prepared for the Ministry of Education by Bolstad et al., (2012) looked at the changing nature of education in New Zealand and what education needs to look like for the 21st century to ensure effectiveness. The report also points out the importance of ensuring students are given authentic opportunities to engage as a way to be able to experience real life challenges. Teachers need to be given more community experience, as learning needs to be more connected to children’s’ home and cultures. The report suggests that student teachers today are encountering learning situations where the muddle of the real world is simplified into manufactured learning tasks where the teacher already knows the outcomes or answers (Bolstad et al, 2012).

Within the teaching degree for early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand, students are required to complete the practical side of their qualification. Differing institutes will have varying requirements concerning the placements of their students and also the expectations as to where they might choose to be placed. It would be beneficial to look at how effective these practicums are in being able to better prepare students for the realities of teaching Pacific children and what might need to be included or altered to ensure this is happening effectively.

Kane and Fontaine (2005) discuss in their report on initial teacher preparation, the challenges in practicum placement. The report included various factors contributing to poor practicum experiences. Some of these included lack of quality associate teachers and the lack of availability of good teachers that often did not have time to take on the responsibility of a student on placement. Kane and Fontaine (2005) discussed a further need for more clarity in the role of associate teachers and expectations to be clear as this lack of clarity impacts upon the students' learning. Various institutions indicated that due to the lack and availability of quality associate teachers they had limited choice in choosing these teachers for their students. This is an area that is cause for concern as practicum experience is a critical component of initial teacher preparation and positive practicum experiences are important. Samu (2015) notes the importance of interactions between the teacher and student and highlights the point that frameworks can be developed that ensure relevant teaching and learning environments for Pacific students.

There are types of knowledges that might be beneficial for teachers to have when teaching Māori students, such as a selection from local whanau/hapu/iwi. It is these communities that should decide the knowledges selected and how these knowledges are given or made accessible (Penetito, 2001). Furthermore, knowledge in Māori communities has a spiritual dimension where it has been handed down from previous generations.

Discussing spirituality as being important to Pacific Peoples, Toso (2011) states that “cultural values for Samoans of collaboration, love, reciprocity, respect are significant aspects of spirituality that form a Samoan and other Pacific philosophy of practice for early childhood teachers” (Toso, 2011, p. 134). Toso (2011) explains the importance of critical spiritual pedagogy and how it is experienced by young Samoan children through the practice of *Lotu Tamaiti* (White Sunday), an important celebration for Samoans. It is one in which children are celebrated and wear white to indicate being pure of heart, whilst reading scriptures and performing songs and skits with their families in the church (Toso, 2011). Toso describes *Lotu Tamaiti* as the essence of Samoan cultural celebrations within a Samoan context. The church is a main point where the community provides young children with culture and language that are supported by beliefs and values (Toso, 2011).

Within the Samoan community, the family of the child are a crucial component. They are viewed as the ones who nurture the child through the use of language. Maintaining and supporting the child's identity through the usage of "culture and practices of spirituality, that as the child develops creates their own notion of who they are" (Toso, 2011, p. 133). Similarly the importance of spirituality being incorporated into the education of Tongan peoples is discussed by Vaioleti (2011). In his thesis he states "...in Aotearoa New Zealand, Tongan students should be exposed to their own language, moral, social and spiritual concepts, important elements of their culture" (p. 3). Vaioleti noted Tongan culture as one of connectedness where within the Tongan structure everyone has a role. It is one which works towards the better good for everyone. Vaioleti highlights the way in which the teacher is perceived by Pacific peoples, one is trusted and has the knowledge that will be able to guide and support Tongan students in meeting their educational needs. It is imperative then that a sound understanding of Pacific students and families is necessary. Being of the spiritual, cultural, social, and economic values underpinning the lives of their Pacific children in their care is one of importance (Vaioleti, 2011).

The importance of spirituality to Pacific Peoples is apparent. It is an aspect vital in having a strong sense of identity and well-being. Jenkin (2010) in her thesis discussed the challenges faced by early childhood teachers in incorporating this essential aspect into their practice when implementing a bicultural curriculum. She noted the teachers' avoidance of addressing the spirituality aspects of the culture despite it being an area that could be further explored and discussed.

The recommendations for teachers again are to have deep understandings and be competent in as many Pacific cultures and languages as possible. This requires looking closely at the current learning institutions and making changes where necessary. This will support in getting the best possible learning experiences that will better prepare and support them in their teaching journey with Pacific children. Those with a desire to come into the realm of teaching children must have a clear understanding that teaching in itself is such a privilege. It is a role where there should be an active commitment to ensuring honest and raw self-reflection on one's practice and how that impacts upon the children in their care, in this case Pacific children.

Cherrington and Shuker (2012) discuss teachers having a self-awareness and of knowing how they respond to issues of diversity as this reflects within their programme planning, theoretical approaches and planned experiences. I believe this to be important as the complexities that come with Pacific children can be an added challenge upon teachers. However, there needs to be an on-going and active commitment to truly understand these complexities with the appropriate support.

2.5 SUMMARY

The education of Pacific children comes with many challenges and layers of complexities. These complexities range from curriculum issues, teacher knowledge and preparation, as well as government strategies that impact upon teachers. It is imperative to ensure teachers are given the appropriate support to be able to meet some of these challenges. Appropriate training and professional development is required as well as teachers developing a better awareness of their own pedagogy with Pacific students. Teachers play a vital role in determining whether a child receives the quality education and care afforded to them. Being able to have an appreciation and a meaningful understanding of Pacific children means having a commitment towards truly going beyond the superficial layers of our curriculum, to not only gain a more in depth understanding but to then put this into meaningful action. Pau'uvale (2011) used examples of Tongan concepts incorporated into mat-times, which manifested important Tongan values and practices of Tongan culture, which could be drawn upon.

Being effective in the education of Pacific children also requires honesty and action taken by teachers to continue to reflect upon their values, attitudes and ideas and the impacts of these for teaching practice. Teachers found it easier to avoid aspects of culture such as spirituality rather than look further into how they could overcome that obstacle, despite the opportunity to do this (Jenkin, 2010). Spirituality is an important characteristic of the Pacific child's identity and avoiding challenges such as these means ultimately denying Pacific children their right to inclusive education. Teachers must not be afraid to navigate the unknown or seek support to be able to make small beginnings towards incorporating spirituality. The Pacific families in our centres are filled with a wealth of knowledge that can be shared with teachers if strong relationships are formed.

It means having a heartfelt commitment to establishing open relationships with families and being open to their views and knowledges and being able to discuss these openly. It is necessary for early childhood teachers and institutes to advocate for changes in the way learning institutes develop their practicum programmes and make changes where possible to ensure student teachers are being effectively prepared to work effectively with Pacific children.

What is apparent, is the fact that teachers play a critical role in a Pacific child's experience at early childhood centres. Whether this is a negative experience or one that works towards the good of the Pacific child is largely the teachers' responsibility. Knowing the Pacific faces in our centres means having an understanding of who these faces are and how best we can support them in their learning journey. It was necessary to begin with the teachers' understandings, those who worked predominantly with Pacific children. In seeking to understand the teachers' realities, I hoped to find answers as to how best we could support them in this challenging role and what might be needed to be more effective in the education of Pacific children.

Chapter 3: Research Approach

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will explain the research approach I chose to use and the justification for this approach with the research. The selection of participants will be discussed as well as the collection of data and the way in which the data were analysed. The ethical considerations that were relevant to my research will be outlined, as well as the strengths, limitations and challenges of this research. The ethics committee (AUTEC) granted approval for this research on November 12th 2013 (Ethics Approval Number 13/320)

This research intended to obtain insight into the understandings and thoughts of early childhood teachers concerning/regarding education for Pacific children. The study was also interested in their challenges and successes that arise in this area. As this could be considered a sensitive topic for some, it was important to use a research approach that allowed for the participants' voice and opinions to be heard. Therefore, I decided the most appropriate research approach was a qualitative methodology with the use of semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is described by Punch (2009) as naturalistic, studying people, things, and events in their natural settings. Qualitative research is one which seeks to understand in depth meaning and experiences of the human experience (Lichtman, 2010). These deeper understandings can then help towards making improvements.

Qualitative research methods are concerned with the individual and the personal beliefs, values, and perceptions. Flick (2009) states "Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives" (p. 30). The use of qualitative research then allows insights through the lived realities of others to be able to make some sense of these changes.

My research topic sought to gain understanding of early childhood teachers and their understandings and thoughts towards education of Pacific children. Each individual shared their experiences and discussed issues that arose out of these experiences. This allowed me a greater insight into challenges and pressures that teachers face in early childhood education with Pacific children and opened up further areas to explore.

“Social structures that can seem impermeable to individuals can, over time, be restructured through changes in policy that result from what we learn from individuals' perspectives” (Hinchman, 2005, p. 104). Hinchman (2005) highlights the importance of giving voice to the individual and individual perspectives that can eventually bring about change where it may have not have appeared possible. In this instance, teachers in early childhood education deserve an opportunity to be able to voice their perspectives and thoughts in a positive environment. This information would also be extremely valuable in being able to provide the appropriate and relevant support necessary. In doing so, this can provide the quality education standards sought after by the various policies (Ministry of Education, 2013) that have focused on Pacific children as priority learners.

Qualitative research is strongly supported by post positivist assumptions. Post positivism takes the stance that “The social world is patterned” and that casual relationships can be discovered and tested via reliable strategies (Leavy, 2011, p. 7). Within the post positivist stance the researcher is in a learning role rather than a testing one (Ryan, 2006). The researcher recognises there is a connection to those he/she is researching. In this way learning is happening alongside others rather just carrying out research on them as they are engaged in the “social construction of a narrative” with those being researched (Ryan, 2006, p. 19). There is also the belief that the world is not a fixed truth. There are multiple realities and what may be seen as truth for some, may not necessarily be truth for another. Within this post positivist stance also lays the belief that the world is open to interpretation and that there will be things that we may never know although science is able to help explain some of those things (O’Leary, 2004).

Qualitative research can also be traced back to the movement symbolic interactionism, which is informed by pragmatism. “Symbolic interactionists define society as a web of social interactions” (Ferrante, 2008, p. 8). This means there is a focus on the ways in which people experience and make sense of the world. Symbolic interaction basically is looking at the relationships between people. Meaning is generated from others and we arrange our lives around these meanings. These meanings can also change (Ferrante, 2008). Seidman (2013) discussed the significance of language and when understanding humans’ experiences. The need to understand the language used is critical to unpacking deeper meanings.

Seidman (2013) states “At the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language” (p. 8). Qualitative research approaches are widely used in research today in many different disciplines. There is a range of ways in which data can be collected. For my specific research I used semi-structured interviews, which is a qualitative approach to research. The semi-structured interviews were developed within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology as a way to draw out people’s social realities (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). It has been a technique described as similar to a conversation. One that is open-ended, free flowing and flexible. For my research it was important to ensure the participants were comfortable enough to be able to share personal information. Klenke (2008) notes that more complicated issues can be explored, within a more comfortable research atmosphere. This can evoke more profound and sensitive information.

With regard to my research, the topic can be considered sensitive for some, as it does require honesty in the way one feels towards Pacific education and the way in which teachers’ practice is influenced by their understanding. It takes boldness and honesty to be able to say what they may think of this topic and in the process perhaps reflect on their current views and possible perceptions. With Pacific children being the subject of focus today in education, the teachers I interviewed may not have felt completely comfortable in sharing their perceptions and honest opinions. Therefore, it was vital that there was an atmosphere of trust and one where there was no pressure to answer direct questions. Through semi-structured interviews, there can be a more relaxed atmosphere where one is more likely to feel comfortable, to answer honestly.

Barriball and While (1994) state “Semi-structured interviews are “well suited for the exploration of perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive information” (p. 330). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) support this and note that interviews are mainly significant when one is concerned about gaining the participant viewpoints. I truly wanted to have a closer look at what early childhood teachers in mainstream education were saying. These were teachers who were all affected by the recent policies which identify Pacific children as priority learners.

3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

It was important to ensure the selection of early childhood teachers who participated in this research, worked with mainly Pacific children or who were in mainstream centres where the majority of children were of Pacific heritage. I was not looking for any particular ethnicity of teachers, but rather focused on having teachers who worked with a large majority of Pacific children. Two of the teachers were of Pacific heritage, one of Chinese heritage and five of New Zealand European heritage. From the eight participants, one was male and the rest were female.

I am fortunate enough to have been working within an early childhood association where I had built up a network of contacts. It was through my own personal network of these contacts, that I was able to approach potential participants directly. I was able to talk to the participants more in depth about my research, face to face and they were able to ask me direct questions, which were answered at that time. Each potential participant was given the appropriate participant information sheet (See Appendix A) to read through and take away with them. All the participants were eager to participate and agreed immediately as a result. The appropriate consent forms (see Appendix B) were signed before we began. I was fortunate that the participants were all teachers who were familiar to me and that we had all met one another throughout the years within the association at various education workshops and meetings. I was humbled and grateful that they all showed a willingness to take part in this study. Each had wonderful positive and excited attitudes towards being a part of this research. They viewed this research as an opportunity to contribute their voice and thoughts on this important topic.

From the participants selected, five were from Public kindergartens and three from early education and care centres in the South Auckland region. I had initially selected six participants for my research, but later selected another two. I felt that eight participants would allow me to have a better range of expert voices/opinions and, therefore, more substantial data for my study. The interviews were conducted at seven of the eight participants' early childhood centres after work. The last participant's interview was conducted at the local cafe as suggested by the participant. After a long day at work, she felt it would be nice to be out of the centre setting. Since it was only a short distance from where I worked, I was able to meet her there.

I fully understood as an early childhood teacher myself, that at the end of a busy day, it was nice to be in a different environment to unwind.

All teachers had been working in early childhood centres for at least two years or more. A written letter of appreciation and a koha or gift was given to each participant. The koha I chose to give to each participant was a thank you card with a small hand sized basket woven out of flax with a polished shell enclosed, as my representation of the Pacific Islands.

An inspirational quote (Jahangiri & Mucciolo, 2012, p. 79) was written on the cards “Teaching is more than imparting knowledge, it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts, it is acquiring knowledge”. I felt this was appropriate as teachers today are faced with a variety of challenges and these are constantly changing. I wanted to ensure that each participant felt my appreciation for contributing their voices to this research but also that they were reminded of the importance and specialness of their role as teachers. I hoped to leave them with supportive and inspiring words for their future journey and position of influence as teachers. For ethical reasons, the participants’ names were not mentioned at any time. Pseudonyms were agreed with all participants involved.

3.3 COLLECTION OF DATA

The collection of data for this investigation was conducted using semi-structured interviews. Questions were prepared prior as a guide for myself in regard to the research question of teachers’ understandings, in working with Pacific children (see Appendix C). It was not a formal interview and there was flexibility in the conversation that occurred. These conversations generated much discussion. All this contributed to information on the teachers’ understanding as well as their own personal viewpoints and thoughts.

The interviews were all recorded by Dictaphone to ensure the information gathered was accurate. Concurrent note taking also took place. Participants chose an appropriate time and location for their informal interviews. As previously mentioned, seven of the eight participants were interviewed at their workplace at the end of their working day. One participant requested having her interview at a local café in the area.

At each interview, I greeted the participants and made them feel at ease by beginning with general conversational chatting about their day until they felt comfortable continuing with the interview.

It was a great opportunity to be able to discuss recent professional development opportunities within the centres. There was also significant discourse about changes in early childhood in general that had occurred. I felt that this was a wonderful time to reconnect with other teachers and just to enjoy hearing about how things were going for each of them personally and professionally. I had brought light snacks and refreshments with me and set this up on tables for the participants to help themselves. At the different workplaces, tea and coffee facilities were available. Participants could help themselves before and during the interviews if they wished to. We spent time talking a little bit more about the research and how their thoughts and views were important. Many of the participants thought it was great that I had decided to further my studies and pursue my Master's degree. One participant in particular expressed her own desire to do this in the next few years. There was much discussion that took place about getting started in this area and the benefits of continuing to study. I was able to give her information on how I began this and the different institutes where she could make further enquiry into what suited her.

Once the interviews began, each interview took a little over an hour. At the end of each interview, the participants were thanked and informed that they would receive the transcripts of the interviews within 2 weeks. After the interview a few of the participants continued to chat with light hearted conversations and we continued to reconnect. I was always mindful of the time and understood that after working an 8 hour day, the participants would be quite tired. However, I allowed the participants to set the pace of conversation and did not want them to feel hurried to end the meeting. I enjoyed our conversations afterwards. Some participants stayed for half an hour or more after their interviews were completed.

3.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF INTERVIEWS

As this was my first time interviewing, it was very exciting and something I looked forward to doing. I envisaged it to be an interesting process and really did not anticipate much of what happened.

There were a lot of obstacles with teachers being unable to make the scheduled times due to many reasons, personal and work related. It took a lot of time to arrange meetings that would suit all involved.

Even though the participants had readily agreed to participate and made time, unexpected circumstances arose. The real challenge was finding time slots that worked for both schedules. One participant became unwell and was unavailable for a week. It took a substantial amount of time to finally reach her to arrange a meeting.

Following this my Dictaphone broke down even though I had checked it beforehand. This Dictaphone was fairly aged, had rarely been used and I was not completely adept with properly using it, despite practicing prior to the interviews. I had already scheduled times and did not want to cancel any interviews. As a solution, I had to use my phone to record some of the interviews, which although not ideal, meant that the interview did not have to be rescheduled. I did not wish to have any further setbacks with time but also wanted to avoid inconveniencing the participants. I felt quite uncomfortable having to do this and after doing two interviews this way, due to the confidential and sensitive information being recorded, I chose to invest in a newer model Dictaphone for later interviews.

Being a novice interviewer, I reflected I could have been more flexible. In hindsight, looking back at the whole process, I focused perhaps too rigidly on the questions I had prepared, rather than using them as a prompt or guide. I believe this may have been due to my own nervousness and the fact that I had not undertaken such research before. The whole process was a new challenge and an unique experience for me. I realised that there were areas I could have probed into and explored further, however, at the time I chose to address the prepared questions.

In retrospect, I think that it would have been more beneficial to have examined specific areas further, such as quality and the challenges that the participants had faced. Confidence and experience definitely aid in increasing skills as an interviewer. There were times during the first few interviews that I was so focused on the next question that I missed listening to what the person was saying. Thus missing opportunities to go deeper by asking participants to clarify or address certain specific challenges or topics that came up during conversation.

However, in the later interviews I did find that I was able to relax more and began feeling more comfortable and confident with the process. Fortunately, it was all taped, giving me the opportunity to go through it again.

As a new researcher I am learning to gain insight into the thoughts of those I interview. This has meant that I have had to really keep my own opinions, perceptions, and mind-set neutral. I also had to be mindful that my body language would also convey the same stance. I endeavoured not to reveal my discomfort of or agreement for what was being said. One interview in particular was difficult for me, as the views of the participant were strongly negative in their perception towards Pacific communities.

Being of part Pacific heritage, I really struggled with what had been said and I felt a need to correct some of those opinions. However, I kept my body language neutral and didn't veer from the questions posed and once again remained mindful, that this was someone's honest perception. It was drawn from their experiences and I was here to try to understand these perceptions and help contribute to bridging this disconnection in some way with my research. I had to learn that these comments were not personally directed at me. The views were not said to make me feel uncomfortable at all, rather the participant was allowing me insight into her honest opinions which I was grateful for and was actually what I had hoped to achieve with my interview approach. I believe I just wasn't prepared to hear such raw, honest, and clear opinions from participants. Upon reflection of the process, I think that carrying out research can at times cause one to develop an idealistic view that there should be no error or mistakes made. I realised that in fact, every researcher had to begin somewhere and that it is highly unlikely that everything will go to plan. The fact that I felt that I could have improved my interviewing techniques gave me an understanding of how I would do it differently if given another chance. It has also taught me how to be better prepared.

3.5 TRANSCRIPT

I initially just listened to the tapes without taking notes. Following this, the notes were documented. All information and participants' perspectives and understandings, were recorded on Dictaphone. As well as recording the interviews, I also took notes. These data were collected and transcribed by myself the researcher, into a word document. During the transcribing procedure, the tapes were played and re-played to ensure the accuracy of the information collected from each participant.

After listening to the tapes a third and fourth time I was able to check, recheck and ensure absolute accuracy of the data collected.

Afterwards, the transcripts were given back to each participant for clarification and accuracy. This was important as understandings and perspectives needed to be correctly documented for accuracy of the data.

I made a phone call to each participant to inform them that the transcripts were ready. I asked each participant if they would prefer me to meet them to receive these or whether they would prefer me to email the transcripts to them. Seven of the participants preferred me emailing them the transcripts as it was more time friendly. One of the participants asked if I could take it to her after work, which I was more than happy to do. Within the week all participants had contacted me and were happy with the transcriptions. I asked each participant if they wanted to add or change anything and was reassured that each participant was fine with what they had read. I also took this opportunity to clarify any questions that I had over the information in the interviews to be sure that I had not misunderstood the information.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed using the Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework for data analysis (data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verification). Data reduction meant having to reduce the data and breaking them down to more meaningful parts without significant loss of information (Punch, 2009). This involved much re-reading of the data collected as well as reviewing the notes taken. The next step involved displaying the data. This was done using Microsoft Excel. I placed all participants in a table format; with the data I had collected next to each. The data were then assessed to identify patterns and themes. Coding was then carried out. Here the different patterns and themes were then categorised. I did this by using specific colours and highlighting the data of each participant. I was then able to clearly see patterns and strong themes coming through. Finally drawing and verifying conclusions was undertaken. I noted strong themes that had emerged, these being professional development for teachers, thoughts on quality and the importance to mainstream education teachers of having a Pacific teacher in centres.

These were once again presented using Excel on a separate table and placed in bold with the applicable data underneath each heading. In the next section I will discuss the ethical considerations of this research.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before undertaking the steps necessary to begin my research, I had to receive prior approval from AUTECH, the AUT Ethics Committee. This was essential for any research involving human participants carried out by either staff or students at AUT University. In accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH), the final ethics approval for this research project was granted on 12 November 2013 (Ethics Approval Number 13/320).

According to Davidson and Tolich (1999) the following table outlines ethical principles that should be followed when undertaking research. These were applied to my own research.

Table 3.1 Expression of Ethical Principles in Interviews

Ethical Principle	Interviews
Do no harm	Participants did not have to answer any questions that may have made them uncomfortable in any way. The participants were informed that they could stop the interview process at any time.
Voluntary participation and informed consent	Participant information forms were given to each potential participant with information regarding the research. Each participant was given the opportunity to ask any questions about the research Participants were given a consent form to sign their voluntary participation.
Anonymity	As I conducted face to face interviews, there was no anonymity in this research.
Confidentiality	All participants were given code names throughout the research. The centres they worked in were not named or identified in any way.
Avoid deceit	No deceit was involved. All questions asked by participants were answered. All participants were given the opportunity to check the transcripts from their interviews.
Data analysed and reported faithfully	Transcripts were given to participants and there were opportunities for corrections and for participants to comment both verbally and in written form. The participants were all in agreement that their transcripts were accurate.

Participants were able to ask questions which were answered without deceit. Most questions asked were based on general enquiry regarding process and protocol for the interview. For example, how long it would take, where they would need to travel to, and what they would be required to do. It was vital for them to have a full understanding of what the research process involved and why the research was taking place, as well as their role and rights throughout this research project.

It was necessary that all participants were protected from any harm throughout the research process. In the event that participants felt uncomfortable, they understood that they did not have to continue on and had the option of not having to answer questions if they did not wish to do so. Even though each participant was very open and happy to answer all the questions, they were aware that they had this option if they wished. Participants were asked whether they would like to be identified in this research by their first names. All the participants expressed that they would prefer anonymity. I decided to assign participants a pseudonym that prevented them from being identified, as well as not identifying the centres in which they worked. Johnson and Christenson (2012) discuss the issues involved with the privacy of the participants being protected. Since the participants all worked within the South Auckland area I felt it was necessary to ensure the privacy and confidentiality. This was also because they had requested they wanted anonymity.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have discussed the methodological framework and the research approach used. The most appropriate methodology approach I decided on for this research was a qualitative methodology with the use of semi-structured interviews. This allowed me to collect important data in a less formal way, where each participant was able to voice their understandings, thoughts, and perceptions of my research topic. I have discussed the ethical issues relevant to my research as well as reflected upon the challenges that arose during the process. The next chapter will discuss the findings that emerged from these interviews.

Chapter 4 : Findings and Discussions

Chapter Two explored the literature relating to Pacific education and the considerable complexities that surround this. As discussed in the literature review, the role of the teacher carries tremendous responsibility in being able to effectively support and teach Pacific children in their centres. In this chapter, data collected from the interviews of eight early childhood teachers working in the South Auckland area, will be discussed in conjunction with the literature. My intention was to gain insight into early childhood teachers' understandings of educating young Pacific children and their own interpretations of what this means for them in their practice. It was an opportunity for teachers to share their experiences and for me as a researcher to hear their stories.

Of the eight teachers interviewed, two were of Pacific heritage, five were New Zealanders of European descent, and one was of Chinese heritage. The two Pacific Island teachers spoke English as a second language and Samoan as their mother tongue. The remaining teachers of European and Chinese heritage, all spoke English as their first language. Seven of the participants were females and one was male. All participants worked in different centres within the South Auckland region. To provide an overview of the participants, information is displayed in Table One as follows:

Table 4.1: Participants

Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Role	Type of centre	Years as ECE Teacher	Age group
John	Chinese	Head Teacher	Public kindergarten	20 years	3 -5 years
Sandy	NZ European	Teacher	Public kindergarten	18 years	3-5 years
Amy	Samoan	Teacher	Privately Owned	3 years	Birth-5 years
Denise	European	Teacher	Public kindergarten	17 years	3-5 years
Sally	Samoan	Teacher	Privately owned	15 years	Birth-5 years
Shontelle	European	Teacher	Public kindergarten	22years	3-5 years
Gemma	NZ European	Head Teacher	Public kindergarten	7 years	3-5 years
Teresa	NZ European	Teacher	Privately owned	12 years	Birth-5 years

Within the interviews, the teachers shared their understandings and reflected upon their practice. After analysing the data, the following three themes came to light;

- Teachers acknowledged the importance of professional development to support them in the area of Pacific education working with Pacific children.
- The teachers felt there was a lack of Pacific teachers in the field and felt that having a Pacific teacher present would help to solve many of the challenges they faced.
- The idea of quality. The teachers referred often to inclusion of Pacific artefacts or resources present within the environment to promote quality and inclusion. The visual environment was important and should include Pacific culture and language.

Each of these themes will be discussed in detail with participants' views to illustrate the points made.

4.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter Two discussed the importance of professional development for teachers, in being able to be more effective in their practice for Pacific children. The Government has made it a priority for teachers to become more competent when educating our Pacific children through the improved skills and knowledge base of teachers. The Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013) is one such strategy that has outlined the government's intention to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers to ensure successful education for Pacific children.

Participants acknowledged that more professional development was needed and necessary when it came to the area of Pacific education as this was linked to their confidence levels when working with Pacific children and families.

There were also various challenges faced in regards to professional development such as time management, quality of the professional development being offered and personal beliefs about being able to implement their learning with confidence. For example, the following quote illustrates the point.

I think we all just gotta take advantage of what's out there and learn as much as we can about Pacific cultures. (Denise, 05/6/2014)

There was a general agreement from the participants, that professional development was useful and they could all gain more from further professional development. This is best summed up in the following quote.

Teachers can and do need to be more supported by being informed through professional development of cultural difference. (Sandy, 06/06/2014)

The participants all recognised the importance and value of professional development in being able to help them become more effective in their practice with Pacific children;

All you can do is continually strive to improve your practice with Pasifika kids and that's what we do...like any PD, we just jump at the opportunity to go, any knowledge. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

There is a wide range and variety of ways in which professional development is offered to teachers today, from online learning courses to workshops, conferences and mentoring. Teachers can benefit from the diverse range of professional development available and take advantage of the different topics that may be applicable to their teaching environment. Inglis (2013) does, however draw attention to the quality of professional development and notes that previous debates over whether simple in-house training or external workshops are effective enough to impact upon one's practice. During interviews when in discussion about how the teachers incorporated Pacific understandings into their practice, Shontelle said;

I like to take PD, courses, It's always motivating but putting it into action can be hard sometimes. Sometimes it feels like you're still not well prepared and left on your own again and I feel like I need to go over it all again and again to build my confidence up better. (Shontelle, 13/06/14)

This was echoed by Teresa who also said in regards to professional development workshops undertaken in the past;

Last year we went to PD on working with Pacific families and children and it was really good, it's just sometimes hard to always remember to do everything and action what we do learn. Then sometimes you kind of feel lost when you do try to start. It would be nice to just have that on-going support. (Teresa, 14/06/14)

Here, Teresa and Shontelle both expressed enjoyment and motivation to learn more in regards to Pacific education, however, it seems they both agreed that on-going support was needed as though they felt the information they received was informative, they still felt they needed guidance and more support to get a grasp on implementing this in their practice. Rameka and Glasgow (2015) discuss teachers needing professional development based on Pasifika values and understandings and one in which services can share knowledge with other services supporting one another in this area.

All the participants had attended professional development (PD) within the last year in the form of single day workshops alongside their team. Only two of the participants, Gemma and Sally however, attended workshops related to working with Pacific children, whilst the other workshops were related to documentation and various other topics of interest at the time.

Many of the participants discussed using families at their centre as a resource to help them in better understanding Pacific children. They also used the internet and information from the Ministry website, in regards to having more Pacific parent involvement;

I'd love some of our Pacific parents and grandparents to come and spend time in the centre and work with the teachers on extending cultural knowledge for the teachers and the children or expanding on it, on you know interest of Pacific culture or something like that. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

When asked to further explain about inviting Pacific parents and families into the centre to do this, Gemma explained,

We've tried before and I don't know how I can...how we can do this because lots of our families are really complex and busy and they're big families and time and so on and so forth...but I've tried six years where I am and I've tried and tried and it kind of just doesn't seem to work, and I guess I don't know how, I don't know how to approach that and how to do that...I guess, I think once you've got one Pasifika parent on board then it would escalate, but it's getting that.... and because our jobs are so busy and so complex (smiling). It's how do you find the time and the way to do that? (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Gemma felt that despite trying to encourage Pacific families into the centre to be involved, (she and her team) attempts had been unsuccessful. This was in the sense that they were not receiving the level of involvement from Pacific families that she would have liked. Valentine (2014) noted in her research that teachers needed to find better ways to make more meaningful connections with Pasifika families. Despite her research being focused on literacy practices and the home-school connections of Samoan parents, Valentine's research identified considerable barriers that prevented many Pacific families' participation and engagement with schools concerning their child's education.

Among these barriers identified were Pacific families' lack of confidence and experience in understanding the school system even though they wanted to be involved. A further barrier was educators not having the proper understandings of how to successfully engage with Pacific families.

Amy discussed a recent event they had celebrated within their centre and said,

So the month that just finished we celebrated multicultural day, so that was oh we encourage parents to bring their children in their cultural clothing and if they want they can come in and make their own cultural dishes for other parents. You know we get so much out of it and its real great seeing parents come in and learning off them about their cultures. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Here Amy felt that the level of involvement from Pacific families was very good in their centre and felt they gained much from having families coming in and sharing their culture with them. Chu, Samala and Paurini (2013) noted that the recognition and implementation of cultural values, identity, and aspirations were vital to Pacific children's success. Teacher strategies that facilitated these were successful as it allowed Pacific students and communities the space to nurture specific cultural values, such as collectivity, relationships, and identity.

The families were able to take the lead within the centres to share themselves and their culture alongside other families from differing cultures.

In discussing high quality professional development, Harwell (2003) says “motivational speakers and pull-out programs are insufficient to meet the challenges faced by teachers” (p. 5). This is important to note, as generally many teachers will undertake professional development, however, they are usually an one-day workshop as experienced by these participants, or depending on team choices they can range from attendance to short term PD or in-centre training over a period of time. John expands upon this idea;

Like sometimes I feel like the PD just guides us but that's where it stops and when there are really hard aspects to tackle there's not much else support...if you know what I mean so you just do what you sometimes think is right with them. (Pacific children). (John, 03/06/14),

John went on to further explain;

It does get hard really getting your head around Pacific culture and we try our best, professional development has helped a lot and really helps me to reflect on my practice but there's still areas I know I can do better in and I try my best, I just sometimes. You really wonder if it's enough. (John, 03/06/14)

Generally, the participants felt that although professional development was valuable and they were willing to accept these opportunities, it seemed they questioned the adequacy of the professional development given to ensure sustained quality practice with Pacific children. They still felt a lack of confidence despite attending professional development with the majority of participants expressing the need for more ongoing and consistent support. Furthermore, opportunities for professional development are often presented, however, teachers can decide to take these opportunities or not. Generally teachers are committed to a full team approach where professional development opportunities are considered and decided upon as a team to attend a chosen topic. Pressure to complete documentation and time issues are all factors that can have an impact on whether these opportunities are utilised or not. Wright (2010) discusses the public awareness of the importance of early childhood education and the pressure placed upon teachers in accountability issues.

In regards to various issues impacting on professional development learning or opportunities Denise said;

I really enjoy any PD available and there have been different workshops you can go to, like we do get the information sent through, but of course we're juggling so many things and feels like there's not enough time to do everything so you just try and fit everything in sometimes and try to manage everything like the workload and paperwork. (Denise, 05/06/14)

Shontelle said;

Honestly, I do think there's a lot of pressure on us teachers to manage everything. You can get so caught up with daily routines and all the things happening, that you honestly sometimes just don't even think about some of the stuff you've learnt (in PD), like there are so many times I've felt like I want to start something then other things just keep coming up and you have to attend to that so I think, its hard just trying to fit everything in along with the day to day stuff we deal with. (Shontelle, 13/06/14)

Teresa said;

I'd love to have more stuff on Pacific children and go to PD, one was out of Auckland though and it looked really good, but yeah it was bad timing and meant having to be away from home and my kids so I couldn't really go then. (Teresa, 14/06/14)

The participants expressed their frustration over various factors that impacted on them being able to undertake the professional development opportunities or having the ability to properly apply what they had learnt into their practice. Despite their willingness to learn more about Pacific children or implement what they had learnt previously, the challenges of time and managing the day to day routines seemed to be a big factor affecting this. The participants felt this prevented them from effectively bringing quality consistently into their practice with Pacific children.

Harwell (2003) acknowledged that within the early childhood teaching environment, time management and lack of resources places considerable pressure upon teachers to be able to give sufficient time and planning to sustained professional development. However, she cautions us that despite the various challenges teachers may come across, if the desire is for better outcomes for the children in our centres, then professional development needs to be a priority and at the heart of teachers attention.

Gemma expressed;

You gotta have it in your heart to work with Pacific communities.....I did some professional development once and the guy talked about us non Pasifika being cultural interpreters, I'll never forget that...that was really big. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Gemma, although of non-Pacific heritage is married to a man of Pacific Island descent. She expressed that she felt this to be an advantage when working with Pacific children.

Yeah, I think because my husband's Pacific, or Samoan, that I've kind of got a bit of a handle...I think I've got a pretty good handle for a white person. I'm not, I don't have the language, I try know odd words, but I can't converse with Pacific people, but I think I have a general overall...yeah that feeling and understanding of Pacific people. So I think that's a real advantage for me. Like just...I don't know...It's hard to explain... but just how to talk to Samoan men or how to talk to a Nana or I don't know, I think I've just got that underlying understanding...and that's what gets me through. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Gemma also expressed her thoughts on the matter about her experience with Pacific children and families;

I think just my own personal experience that I really, really love working with Pasifika children and communities and parents and I think that, yeah I just think, they're just quite misunderstood. You've really got to get down to the nitty gritty and be non-judgemental and know their way of life and way of thinking to understand them and I think if you can't do that as a non-Pacific teacher then you can't give the children and families what they want. I just think that, you've gotta really have a passion in your heart for the children and the community and their...and just really understand them. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Unsurprisingly the two participants of Pacific Island heritage expressed their thoughts with regard to quality in education for Pacific children, Sally articulated when asked about current challenges in the area of Pacific children;

I feel the children are not being given enough opportunities to grow in their own cultural values and knowledge, due to the closed practices in the centre. That is, the management and teachers are just following a routine and old ways of operating. You just have to really have a love and deep knowledge of Pacific children and want to really go further in that, you know like making the effort to really understand the people, our culture and values. (Sally, 02/06/14)

Sally is suggesting people go further, indicating the need for non-Pacific teachers to do professional development. Amy who is also of Pacific heritage and the youngest participant, developed the ideas hinted at by Sally, she felt might help to resolve current challenges with Pacific children;

I think that the Pākehā teachers who teach Pacific Islander children, I think they personally need to go back into school and take... just an extra course on what Pacific Islanders are about and what their teaching, values and beliefs are so we're all on the same page...yeah. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Both participants of Pacific heritage felt that Pacific children lacked adequate opportunities to explore their culture. As Sally expressed in her centre having 'closed' practices. This related to following old routines and ways of doing things where teachers were happy to stay within their comfort zones. Similarly, Gemma noted the need that to love and go beyond tokenistic practice. Amy felt that there were differences in understandings between Pākehā teachers and Pacific cultures. She felt that the Pākehā teachers would benefit from further education in Pacific culture to gain a deeper understanding.

Jenkin (2010) discussed the importance of introducing strategies that support teachers to grow in confidence and competence in their practice when implementing a bicultural curriculum. Similarly teachers involved in the education of Pacific children should be supported to ensure they are being culturally responsive as this has a huge impact on the children they work with. Porter-Samuels (2013) discusses cultural responsiveness as being able to acknowledge the needs of the specific cultural groups present and to "take action to address those needs" (p. 17). In looking at effective culturally responsive teachers, Porter-Samuels makes mention that there are certain qualities these teachers possess that allow them to be effective in building relationships with children from diverse groups. This includes teachers having empathy and valuing the child's culture and language. Furthermore, suggestions for effective teaching practice with Pacific children included taking an interest in their worlds. This includes having an interest in them as individuals, and not focusing on their academic achievement. This was also supported by Schuster (2008) when asking the question about who the best teachers were for Pacific children, he states "The best teachers of Pasifika children are...the best teachers. It's empathy not just ethnicity that's important" (p. 12). Within the interviews a strong theme that was identified was teachers feeling that there was a lack of Pacific teachers in the field and that they felt that this would help greatly in their practice with Pacific children. I will look at this theme in the next section.

4.2 ROLE OF PACIFIC TEACHERS

It is interesting to note that six of the teachers interviewed who are non-Pacific felt strongly that a Pacific teacher would help to address many of the challenges faced when working with Pacific children and families. This would serve in improving communication. As Gemma said;

I think every centre in South Auckland that has a high proportion of Pacific children should have a Pacific teacher and I think that would be the answer to a lot of things. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Shontelle who also said:

I'll be honest with you it scares me. If I go to certain centres within South Auckland, I just sit there and I am amazed at the teachers that I work with who will use the language, and just the way they interact with them. I do try but don't feel very confident which is why I think it's great when you have Pacific teachers there. (Shontelle, 13/06/14)

In reviewing the teachers' responses, there seemed to be a lack of confidence in the non-Pacific teachers' in their own ability to use Pacific languages within their practice. There also seemed to be a general dependence on having a Pacific teacher present that could help to tackle some of the challenges non-Pacific teachers faced within their centres. Jenkin's (2010) research in supporting Tiriti based curriculum in mainstream early childhood education discussed the value and importance of a team approach. Although focused on the bicultural curriculum and its implementation, similarities can be seen when working with Pacific children that can be adapted and used within the teachers practice.

Jenkin (2010) noted that despite teachers having "a respect for the implementation of Tiriti-based curriculum, fear and lack of skills in this area took responsibility away from them making them more Māori-reliant" (p. 244). Ritchie and Rau (2006) found that a team commitment was more effective in being able to implement a bicultural curriculum. In doing so, teachers more confident in their ability to learn and grow not only with one another, but in their individual abilities. This included gaining understanding in key commitments to a bicultural curriculum and being able to take opportunities for growth through professional development to support their understanding.

Interestingly, comments from one of the Pacific teachers seemed to facilitate this view, as when asked about what was currently happening in their centre with Pacific children Amy responded

In the area of Pacific children, I believe nothing is happening in my centre personally. Because there's only two Islander teachers and we try, me and my other colleague, we try our best to, to incorporate our Pacific teaching within our practice and it's no use to try and make it work when the other staff are not supportive towards us, like not helping and being involved. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Amy went on to further explain specific challenges

"There's hardly any Pasifika teachers around this area, we all have the white teachers...the Pākehā ones sorry. And honestly they've been brought up the Pākehā way and they wouldn't know how it's like being brought up the Islander way, we have different teachings, beliefs, and values. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Here Amy was explaining her frustration at being one of two Pacific teachers in her centre expected to implement Pacific practices as she was of Pacific heritage. Amy expressed that this was difficult if the whole team did not make an effort to be involved. Rather it felt as if she was responsible for dealing with that aspect within the centre. Jenkin (2010) discussed the benefits of teamwork where teachers can learn from one another, share ideas and have meaningful discussions about each teachers' views in regards to a bicultural curriculum. In analysing the data there seemed to be a misunderstanding between the cultures. Where non-Pacific teachers were willing but did not have a lot of confidence in their ability to effectively implement and communicate in Pacific practices and language. Therefore, a Pacific teacher present was seen as someone who could guide and support them while gaining confidence in this area.

Warren (2014) explored bicultural teaching practice and noted that despite the intention of bicultural teaching that should reflect the partnership of the treaty between Māori and Pākehā, this is an area of challenge for Pākehā teachers. Factors such as lack of confidence and lack of knowledge of Māori culture and language contribute to effective teaching of Māori. Similarly, the lack of confidence in many ways prevented non-Pacific teachers from engaging effectively with Pacific children as Teresa said

I sometimes feel really self-conscious with pronouncing the greetings and think I might offend families. Sometimes it just seems easier to let the Samoan teachers handle that all and I stick to what I know best. (Teresa, 14/06/14)

John said;

It really helps having our Pacific Island teachers in the centre, because they really help us understand and especially with talking to parents and families when they don't speak English, I know we're really fortunate to have them, I really feel a bit silly trying to sing some of the Pacific songs and I struggle to explain things sometimes but they (Pacific teachers) just go for it and help us out with that. (John, 03/06/14).

4.3 BICULTURAL CURRICULUM

Much has been said previously in research relating to teachers in early childhood and their challenges in implementing the bicultural curriculum. Williams et al., (2012) discuss cultural competence of early childhood teachers. Their research lay open the "levels of discomfort" (p. 34) felt by early childhood teachers when faced with the use of te reo Māori in their practice. This was one of the explanations as to why teachers were hesitant to use te reo with children and whanau in their centres. Lack of confidence has been a consistent challenge for many teachers in early childhood (Ritchie, 2002).

Implementing songs at mat times in Māori is one such language strategy that could be used with Pacific languages.

We started learning this Maori song to celebrate Matariki and I just, I really struggled with the words, sometimes it's just so nerve racking too when you have some parents watching and you're just thinking am I singing it right? ...Thank goodness X was there next to me coz I honestly don't think I could do it without her, she's just better at these things. (Sandy, 06/06/14)

In Sandy's experience, X referred to her colleague of Pacific heritage. She explained her discomfort about implementing Māori songs on her own and felt better when her colleague was with her to do so.

Even though Sandy spoke about her lack of confidence singing the Māori songs, she was also referring to any cultural things similar such as Pacific songs;

I'll be honest I just felt uncomfortable like it's just lip service really, whenever it comes to cultural things like this we always look to X to help us.(Sandy, 06/06/14)

Many of the non-Pacific participants had a general feeling that a Pacific teacher would be able to lead in this area and found this to be valuable especially with the challenges of language and communication. Gemma said;

A major, major one is obviously language, it's not just communicating with children. I mean children pick up English really, really, really quickly if they start with limited English language they pick it up really, really quickly but it's conveying it's conversing with parents or grandparents. A lot of grandparents bring our children in so it's kind of relaying information you know that gets back to the mum or dad. That's probably the biggest challenge but yeah the biggest challenge would definitely be communication by far and that's where I say a Pacific teacher would solve that. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

Another challenge with Pacific language, was communication difficulties, Teresa said

I really struggle sometimes with the language, just not always being able to communicate where I'm not understanding the child, it can get a little frustrating. I think also there's so much pressure to...to make sure we're doing it all right for Pacific children and I feel like we should be inclusive to all children, I think more needs to be spent on getting Pacific people getting qualified as teachers because we need more of them in our centres. I think that's ideal but just seems like there's hardly any around. (Teresa, 14/06/14)

The majority of participants all felt that more Pacific teachers in the field of early childhood would be a great asset. It seems the non-Pacific participants felt more confident having a Pacific teacher present to support and guide them with cultural challenges. Schuster (2008) paper examines the assumption that the best teachers for Pacific children are Pacific teachers. He discusses a key strategy from the Ministry in developing a culturally responsive programme (CRP). Unique in its design in which it was developed by Pasifika field staff for their non Pasifika colleagues and has been implemented nationally through various special education offices. It is a programme that “connects cultural knowledge and theory with practice” (p. 2). It is intended to help raise non-Pasifika teachers’ cultural competency.

Schuster (2008) also mentions that although more Pasifika practitioners would be ideal, their needs to be a continued effort to strive towards the “development of professional learning programmes and cultural competencies” (p. 3).

Jenkin (2010) also noted in her research, a similar reliance of non-Māori teachers in centre with Māori teachers to help with the implementation of the bicultural curriculum. Considerable challenges with this approach that were revealed included placing responsibility on the Māori teachers present to ensure implementation of the bicultural curriculum.

4.4 THE IDEA OF QUALITY

Understanding the participant's ideas of what quality for Pacific children looked like to them were varied. Many of the participants referred to building relationships with the families and the inclusion of resources within their centre from different Pacific cultures. Denise said;

Quality is making the environment inclusive for families, through things like visual documentation and displaying their cultural artefacts. (Denise, 05/06/14)

This was similar to what Teresa said;

Family is very important so making sure we understand the parent's values and aspirations for their children and work with them to achieve that. I think making sure we display their artefacts and Pacific things and resources that is very important for the children to see that their culture is important. (Teresa, 14/06/14)

John also shared his thoughts on the importance of relationships as well as artefacts;

It's really getting to know the families and children, and just having those warm connections with them to build great relationships. We make sure we have lots of cultural resources displayed so that families and children can just feel like they have a place, stuff that's meaningful to them. (John, 03/06/14)

Sandy made the point about relationship building as Pacific families are all different;

Pacific families should not be looked at as, as all the same. I think the basis for this understanding is close teacher relationships with the individual families you know built on verbal conversations instead of relying on the written word, I mean in my own experience the written information we give to families is just not effective. Having lots of cultural resources around and displayed is important too and we make sure we have that. (Sandy, 06/06/14)

Chan (2011) also discussed the danger in teachers setting up environments with artefacts and various other cultural items showing their commitment to cultural diversity. She noted that teachers "run the risk of perpetuating stereotypical views of ethnic groups and ignoring individual differences" (p. 6).

Many of the participants referred to ensuring that there were appropriate cultural resources available and being displayed as well as building good relationships and respecting the families and children.

They expressed that the environment was important and having Pacific cultural items and documentation was a big part of quality for Pacific children. Ongley (2013) discussed teachers' fears in similarly delivering a bicultural curriculum and coming across as tokenistic. However the suggestion made is that this can be avoided through the teachers' knowledges and understanding of the Māori culture.

Gemma added to the debate by incorporating language;

I think first and foremost it's about making the children and their families feel welcome in being in an environment where they can be themselves. I think they need to be respected, their culture, their language their way of life, their values and beliefs needs to be respected first and as far as I think if that base lines there then the quality of education will come after that. (Gemma, 10/06/14)

For Gemma, respect had to be present first and foremost for quality to really take place. Kolone-Collins (2010) noted the importance of affirmation for one's culture. Her research on the significance of Samoan story-telling is a call for others as well as Samoans to not disregard the wisdom learnt in educating Samoan children. Kolone-Collins (2010) maintains there should still be "self-confidence and self-respect in the Samoan language and culture" (p. 6).

Vaioleti (2011) also discussed the importance of Tongan concepts and values. In discussing the role of the teacher, Vaioleti explains within the Tongan community a teacher is one who is highly regarded and respected with knowledge. In the education context, he/she should be able to cater to the learning needs of their students. In this way, it is imperative for teachers in Aotearoa to have "sound understanding of the social, cultural, spiritual and economical values that underpin the lives of their students and families" (p. 66).

Shontelle had a different view to quality;

I don't think that there should be a specific area that we concentrate on. Personally I believe that its inclusion. So all children regardless of where they come from, ethnicity, special needs, they should all be treated the same. I don't treat any child any differently, I may think differently, but I try and treat them all the same, give them all the same quality. (Shontelle, 13/06/14)

When asked to further explain about what she felt she had seen over the years in regards to changes in early childhood with regard to Pacific children and quality, Shontelle shared;

I think we're including them more in the resources within the environment. But as far as teaching goes, I think that we are just teaching them, it's like when in Rome you know, do as the Romans. So I just think we are including all children throughout the day, we're just doing snippets of everybody. Not just Pacifics, not just Māori but also the Asians. (Shontelle, 13/06/14)

Shontelle felt that her idea of quality was inclusion where everyone was treated the same and not focusing on specific ethnicity. In contrast, one of the two Pacific participants noted that quality for Pacific children incorporated community as well as family.

For me quality education for Pacific children is the inclusion of family and community in early childhood programmes, it doesn't matter whether it's mainstream or you know language immersion or just private or community based or whatever, inclusion should mean Pacific families should have a voice in what their children are learning, and their cultural values and beliefs are evident in the day to day running of the centre, you know – like what is good and right according to our Pacific people. Every Pacific child needs to be valued for his or her uniqueness and treated with respect and without judgment. I also think our Pacific language needs to be used more and promoted in everyday activities. (Sally, 02/06/14)

Nakhid (2012) discusses Pacific Peoples' desire to maintain their cultural identity as well as continue their language and culture. Within the early childhood context, the knowledge and wisdom of Pacific cultures can enrich the learning experiences for the Pacific child as well as strengthen relationships between teacher and parents for the benefit of the child. Thaman (2003) states “Valuing indigenous ways of knowing usually results in mutually beneficial collaboration between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples, and improves their treatment of each other as equals” (p. 11).

For Amy, quality meant;

It's really making that effort to know and understand our Pacific people and letting them have a voice and place in our centre. You know it's not just about hanging stuff up on the wall or just saying you know like “Talofa” (laughs) even though we do, it's really building a deep relationship and promoting the culture in what we do at the centre. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Amy went on to further share;

Just talking and communicating with parents in our home language, in our own language. Me being Samoan, I'm able to hold everyday conversations with our Samoan parents that we have in here, and even with my colleague. She's Tongan and she has, well we have the longest conversations with our parents. And they feel at home when you know they know that they have a Pacific Islander teacher teaching their children, because we know the cultural ways of how things go you know. So I think language is really important and even though people might not speak Samoan or Tongan or whatever culture is there, it helps to see people really trying and just wanting to learn and use it in their practice you know. (Amy, 02/06/14)

Both Pacific participants had differing thoughts on what quality meant for them and placed more emphasis on inclusion of the families and using the language in everyday practice. As Sally expressed, quality should be evident in everyday practice. Sally who is also of Pacific heritage noted;

Not having teachers on the same wavelength. Implementing Pasifika values and views into the programmes has been definitely hard. There were always walls put up against the idea of having Pasifika overview for the centre and implementing resources to promote any cultural beliefs. (Sally, 02/06/14)

Although Sally was speaking about some of her non-Pacific colleagues she also shared her thoughts on some of her Pacific colleagues throughout her work experiences over the years and her concern for their valuing of assimilation.

For me personally, I often see the old Pacific thinking still at large with our own people, in regards to colonisation, we are still operating from a colonised mind-set that says, our own language and values do not help children become successful in life. I believe this deficit thinking is not helping children to understand their own culture and have quality education in ECE. Instead they are robbed of their unique cultural values and knowing their identity. They are taught in a dominant culture's beliefs systems and sometimes our Pacific teachers just follow that way of thinking. (Sally, 02/06/14)

Sally felt that many Pacific teachers, in her experience were not properly providing quality. Because they were influenced by Western teaching and working from a negative mind-set towards their own people. She felt that this needed to change and be challenged for true quality in education to exist for Pacific children. Thaman (2003) discussed reclaiming Pacific knowledges, wisdom and perspectives after being “supressed and undervalued for many years under Western influences” (p. 3). In describing Western influence within education, Thaman points out the importance for Pacific Peoples to critically analyse the “images and representations they have inherited as a result of this influence” (p. 5).

This is critical, as many have accepted Western ideas as truths for themselves as natural, which then has a follow on effect impacting the ways in which one “manages their work, life, and lives” (p. 5).

Despite the non-Pacific teachers’ emphasis on resources, neither of the participants of Pacific heritage referred to cultural resources being displayed, as highly important. They both emphasised language and families being involved, with Amy pointing out that it was more than just using the greeting and having items displayed on the wall. Gorinski and Fraser (2006) discuss effective strategies such as collaboration between the schools and communities, one in which parents are able to be involved in the decision making process regarding their child.

4.5 SUMMARY

The intention of this study was to explore the understandings of early childhood education teachers in mainstream in regards to Pacific education. The early childhood education teachers all worked within centres in South Auckland with a large majority of Pacific children and were able to give insight into their understandings in the education of Pacific children through semi-structured interviews. The important findings of this chapter are noted.

Teachers were in favour of having appropriate professional development to support them in working more effectively with Pacific children. A majority of the teachers did feel that although professional development opportunities were available however, they did not provide the ongoing support needed to build their confidence levels with Pacific children. Although attending professional development opportunities such as workshops was motivating, many teachers still found it a challenge implementing what they had learnt without on-going support. They also expressed that support needed to be relevant and appropriate for their practice with Pacific children.

Lack of confidence was a big area for the majority of teachers. Many expressed that they felt self-conscious or inadequate as they tried to implement Pacific songs or language. The non-Pacific teachers in this study preferred to depend on Pacific teachers in the centre. They wanted to hand over the problem they felt ill-equipped to deal with. Their ideal strategy was having a Pacific teacher to support them with implementing Pacific strategies in their practice.

The Pacific teacher Amy in this study expressed the frustration at her non-Pacific colleagues' expectation for her to implement Pacific strategies often without support. This was due to her being of Pacific heritage and so the reliance was on her to manage Pacific culture. Previous research (Jenkin, 2010; Ongley, 2013) have noted the challenges facing early childhood teachers in aspects of implementing a bicultural curriculum. Fear of coming across as tokenistic prevents teachers from being able to be effective in implementing the strategies needed to support a bicultural curriculum in early childhood education today. "They feel that what they do is not enough and that it doesn't make much difference anyway" (Ongley, 2013, p. 3).

Although Ongley refers to the bicultural curriculum, this can be seen with the majority of non-Pacific teachers within this study. They express their, lack of confidence in using Pacific language and strategies effectively, which stems from questions of whether they are doing it properly and appropriately and whether it is enough. There was also a general feeling of self-consciousness in this area. Therefore, their perception of having a Pacific teacher present solved this for them and dependence on Pacific colleagues was a result.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in the findings of quality, the non Pacific teachers held differing views to the Pacific teachers in this study. Non Pacific teachers still referred to quality for Pacific children as the environment and ensuring appropriate resources were available. They were certain about the importance of belonging and wellbeing (Ministry of Education, 1996) for families and children. It was found that the non Pacific teachers felt that Pacific families and children coming into the centres needed to see that their culture was included and respected, and this was achieved through ensuring appropriate resources were available as well as cultural artefacts present.

The Pacific teachers in this study expressed the involvement of family and language was important and did not refer to resources as being imperative. Both Pacific teachers referred to the obvious differences in values and beliefs of Pacific People and their non-Pacific colleagues. As previously noted, Pacific academics have argued that deeper ways and knowledge of Pacific cultures are imperative to be able to provide quality for Pacific children (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Pau'uvale, 2011; Teisina, 2011; Thaman, 1997).

This means going beyond the wall displays and simple greetings. Although having wall displays and various cultural items present may send the message of inclusion to Pacific families and children, there is much more to be known as Amy has mentioned, of the Pacific groups present.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research explored the understandings of mainstream early childhood teachers in the education of Pacific children. Eight early childhood teachers were invited to take part in the research that brought to light their understandings in early childhood education with Pacific children, and how this linked to their practice. All eight teachers worked in South Auckland in centres where Pacific and Māori children make up the majority of children present at their centres. Of the eight teachers, two were of Pacific heritage and were also fluent in their own language. Five of the teachers identified as being New Zealand European descent and the other teacher was of Chinese heritage. The teachers who took part in this research had varied experiences of working within early childhood education. The youngest participant had recently graduated and been working in early childhood for two years and the rest of the participants ranged from working within the sector from three to twenty two years. (See Table 4.1).

The research focused on teachers in mainstream early childhood education. Teachers are at the forefront of accountability in being expected by the Ministry to provide quality early childhood education and care for those identified as priority learners. Pacific and Māori children have been recognised and placed in this category, with the government implementing various policies to ensure teachers are providing the quality necessary to lift underachievement numbers with Māori and Pacific children. It was necessary to gain insight from teachers themselves to hear their voice, in doing some direction and ideas on what support could be provided in the areas for early childhood teachers working with Pacific children are expressed.

5.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This study was designed to provide an answer to the research question:

What are mainstream early childhood teachers understandings of Pacific education?

In a search for the answers, seven questions in regards to working with Pacific children were used and responded to in face to face interviews by the eight participants in this research project (see Appendix C).

The participants were able to share their views including challenges when working with Pacific children. Upon analysing the data, three themes were identified and discussed in the previous chapter. These themes were;

- The importance of professional development for practice, and the need for more support to aid in working with Pacific children.
- The majority of teachers were in agreement that there was a lack of Pacific teachers within the sector and believed a Pacific teacher in each centre would be ideal.
- The idea of quality from the majority of teachers was providing Pacific resources and displays so as to establish a place of belonging and inclusion for Pacific children and their families.

The research findings show that these themes are consistent with previous research, such as the teachers' need for support and professional development opportunities that will facilitate their understandings in working with Pacific children (Harwell, 2003; Howard, 2010; Inglis, 2013; Rameka & Glasgow, 2015). Professional development is imperative for all teachers to extend their knowledge and be able to challenge themselves and their ways of thinking. It encourages them to change or improve on aspects of their teaching practice, using new knowledge, acquired to benefit those they teach (Patton, Parker & Tannehill, 2015).

In regard to the topic of educating Pacific children, there is research (Allen et al., 2008; Nakhid, 2012; Thaman, 1997) that points to the vital need for teachers today to grow in their understanding of Pacific culture and values, to be able to provide the quality necessary for Pacific children and families to thrive. This will support Pacific families' aspirations for their children. The research findings indicated that teachers are in need of re-assessing their ideas and understanding of what quality is for Pacific children (Pau'uvale, 2011; Kolone-Collins, 2010; Thaman, 1997; Toso, 2011). Ensuring there are adequate resources present and displayed to make sure Pacific children have a sense of belonging within the centre is important. Although the non-Pacific teachers thought this was important, it was not part of what the Pacific teachers in this study even considered as quality. However, the strategies used within the teachers' teaching practice, are only as effective as one's knowledge and understanding of those Pacific children in front of them.

Perhaps this was highlighted through the difference in ideas with regard to what quality was for the two Pacific teachers' responses in comparison to the teachers of non-Pacific heritage. Language and relationships were integral to Pacific quality from the Pacific teachers' perspectives. There was no reference to resources and artefacts, in fact one teacher even expressed that, it was more than "*hanging stuff up on a wall*" (Amy, 02/06/14). Ongley states, "Tokenism can be avoided by practitioners' knowledge of Māori development theories and the accurate vision of the Māori child" (Ongley, 2013, p. 3). Ongley makes reference to Māori children in this study; however the similarity for Pacific children is sure. In the same way, early childhood teachers should have a more in depth knowledge of Pacific development theories and correct understandings of the Pacific children present in their centres.

This research found that the all the teachers' understood and acknowledged the importance of professional development. There was a willingness to undertake professional development opportunities in order to become more effective in their practice. However, it was obvious that current professional development opportunities were not so effective in supporting teachers to maintain confidence in their practice with Pacific children. Other factors impacting upon professional development opportunities pointed to time challenges as well as other commitments such as documentation.

The research indicated that dependence on Pacific teachers was a result of teachers' feeling a lack of confidence in their own ability to implement Pacific strategies within their practice. These included use of Pacific language, more often, implementing Pacific songs, and Pacific cultural events. Previous research (Jenkin, 2010; Ritchie & Rau, 2006) has shown that lack of confidence has a direct impact on teachers' ability to incorporate strategies effectively when working with diverse communities. Naturally, teachers felt that having a Pacific teacher present would support them in achieving such effective practice with Pacific children. Although that may be true, one must remember that quite often stereotypes can be created where teachers perceive others to be more knowledgeable based on their cultural heritage and place dependence on Pacific teachers. Jenkin (2010), noted the value of risk taking within teaching and teachers needing to take responsibility in gaining more confidence in their practice. Although this research referred to the bicultural curriculum, this is a similar solution for teachers placing dependence and considerable pressure on Pacific teachers to lead the way in the area of teaching Pacific children effectively.

In response to my research question, I believe that there is significant variation in the understandings of what quality means to mainstream early childhood teachers, with regard to the education of Pacific children. There were noted differences in the ideas of quality from the non-Pacific teachers to the Pacific teachers within this study. Several variables include the need for more culturally focused professional development, personal experiences and opinions, lack of confidence, and proficiency in being able to implement the current early childhood bicultural curriculum, the need for an increased number of Pacific teachers, and differing perspectives on what quality is for a Pacific child.

In summary the findings show that it takes a teacher who is well supported and personally motivated to be more than just a teacher. One who is willing to go above and beyond for Pacific children. Keeping at the heart of their teaching, Pacific Island children, their needs, their values and what quality is for them to succeed.

5.3 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The strengths of this study are that it adds to the body of research in the early childhood education sector that brings to light the challenges unique to New Zealand on Pacific education. The research will be one of interest in particular to those working within the education sector and those having an interest in Pacific education in this area. It gives voice to the very real challenges early childhood teachers' face and the ways in which they can be supported in ensuring quality practice with Pacific children. Teachers in New Zealand today are facing a number of challenges.

The growing population of Pacific children within centres and the consistent underachievement statistics in regard to Pacific children make it imperative for more effective strategies and professional development options to support teachers. There was a Pasifika programme available at AUT, which offered a degree developed with the Pacific community, however, this will be closed down by the end of 2017 and is currently no longer available for new students.

Another strength of this study was the invaluable knowledge and understanding I gained in undertaking this research. I was able to become clearer on my own position of Pacific education and gain a better understanding of the complexities involved in Pacific education for teachers.

Without a doubt, this research has now imparted in me a desire to know and learn more about quality for Pacific children as an early childhood teacher myself, and to ensure that I am working to the best of my ability in implementing practice that leads to effective change for Pacific children and families. Being of Pacific heritage, it has made me curious to deepen my knowledge and understandings of Pacific ways of knowing and doing.

Limitations of this study are that the sample in this research was small with all of the eight participants working within the South Auckland area. In many ways I do consider this a strength also, as the South Auckland area has the highest population of Pacific children in centres in Auckland. However, the small sample of participants produced findings that are only indicative and a larger sample could have provided a more solid set of data from which to draw

Another limitation was the snowballing method of recruiting participants. As a result some of the participants interested in taking part in the research knew one another and worked within the same centres. In this way the findings could be restricted to teachers who have similar practices and views as well as similar challenges. That notwithstanding, I am extremely grateful to all the teachers who chose to participate and share their valuable thoughts and experiences for this research project.

5.4 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

I believe this research has made a contribution by emphasising the need for teachers working within early childhood education to re-assess their understandings of what quality is for Pacific children. Currently, there is a small body of literature available from Pacific academics (Pau'uvale, 2011; Kolone-Collins, 2010; Thaman, 1997; Toso, 2011) which highlights the ways for teachers to have a better understanding of Pacific children in order to provide quality practice. It emphasizes the need for more effective professional development options. These should be relevant to teachers working with Pacific children. Appropriate support should be given in building their confidence levels in working to provide quality for Pacific children.

Although professional development opportunities are available, the findings of this research show that there is a need to look closer at how effectively professional development programmes are catering to the specific needs of early childhood teachers and whether this leads to changes in practice.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH

Possible future research could explore in further depth and with a larger sample size, teachers working with Pacific children and the ways in which their understandings have had an impact on their current practice. This could look at different areas within New Zealand to contrast and compare each to see if there are differences and why these differences may be present. It would be interesting to see how other Pacific teachers in Language Nests provide for quality as well as those in playcentres, home based care, and to evaluate what is happening in diverse decile areas

With *Te Whāriki* being the early childhood sector's national and first bicultural curriculum, further areas to explore could look at the ways in which mainstream educators utilise *Te Whāriki* to provide quality practice for Pacific children. As a big part of teachers' practice involves being guided by *Te Whāriki*, more needs to be researched about the effectiveness of our national curriculum in supporting early childhood teachers working with Pacific children.

Past research and literature points to teachers' struggles with aspects of implementing a bicultural curriculum (Jenkin, 2010; Ritchie, 2003; Ritchie & Rau, 2006), this poses the question of where Pacific children fit amongst these on-going challenges and whether *Te Whāriki* truly supports teachers in providing quality practice for Pacific children.

With the mounting pressure on teachers today to provide evidence of accountability in the area of Pacific children, it may also be worthwhile to explore the understandings and knowledges of mainstream teachers on a larger scale and their personal motivation levels in early childhood today and the ways in which they use strategies to tackle these challenges.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The opportunity to undertake this research project was one of the most intense learning experiences and a journey into discovering my own Pacific roots in a way I could not have expected. I can say there was much self-discovery and a tremendous appreciation for the process of undertaking such a journey.

However, in doing so, it has given me the desire and motivation to continue to learn and research more within the topic of Pacific education and to continue looking at the ways in which teachers can support and provide the best quality for Pacific children and families. Working as an early childhood teacher in the South Auckland area gave me the wonderful opportunity to meet many Pacific families, many of whom I have come to know well and so have developed a passionate desire to see their children flourish and excel in every way possible. It was working alongside these wonderful children that I had a heartfelt desire to see them succeed and live to their fullest potential. Undertaking this research gave me an insight into understanding how and why there continues to be negative statistics and deficit views that persistently label Pacific children. As I progressed with this research, I began to realise that there are huge complexities in the issue of the underachievement of Pacific children. Solutions suggested by non-Pacific teachers would enable them to abdicate their responsibilities of Pacific children.

I also came to understand that there are a multitude of reasons that can impact the quality of education that our Pacific children are receiving and as mentioned before, no one solution. What I have been left with after this journey is the firm conviction that these statistics can be changed and Pacific children can thrive and succeed in education and grow into valuable members of society today without the stereotyping or labels being placed upon them.

I believe that teachers are in the best position possible to effect change; however, it requires our teachers to have the desire to discover the uniqueness of the different Pacific cultures and begin to deepen their knowledge so that we can work collaboratively towards quality for Pacific children. Teachers must have the desire to step outside their comfort zones and have an awareness of their own perceptions and understandings. I think for many of us, it is easy to fall into the daily routines and continue on without ever really stepping out of our comfort zones to challenge ourselves.

However, change is necessary for growth, whether it is changing our mind sets or our practice. Teachers can begin to explore indigenous ways of knowing on a deeper level and gaining this knowledge for themselves if the desire to do so is there. The many voices of teachers can become loud enough for policy makers as well as the government to review the ways in which support is given for teachers to work through these challenges in early childhood education today.

I know for myself, it has opened up an incredible door of opportunity to continue to explore the many challenges faced by Pacific Peoples. This has also given me the privilege to discover the wisdom of many other Pacific academics and their research through this journey. In doing so this research it has led me down a path of personal self-discovery and exploration into my own ways of thinking not only as an early childhood teacher, but as a mother and Pacific person.

My hope is that this research will in some way help other early childhood teachers and the children they influence to look toward or to start effecting change for the better in their practice with Pacific children.

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List of Abbreviations

ERO	Education Review Office
PD	Professional Development

Appendix A: Participation Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: 5 September 2013

Project Title

Mainstream early childhood teachers and their understandings of Pacific education.

My name is Jasmin Jattan. I am currently undertaking my Masters in Education. As part of this qualification for my thesis I have chosen to research early childhood teachers and their current understandings in the education of Pacific children. I would like to invite you to participate in this research topic as your views and voice as an experienced early childhood teacher is important to be able to gain further insight into this topic. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection. Your confidentiality is important and will be maintained throughout the process of this research unless you request for your name to be known.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research as stated above is to gain insight into the current perceptions and understandings early childhood teachers have in the education of Pacific children. Early childhood teachers have had increasing accountability expectations to be able to provide quality education for Pacific children. The growing number of Pacific children has been a focus of government and Ministry of Education initiatives to ensure early childhood centres are responding appropriately to their educational needs. Through this research I hope to gain insight into the possible challenges faced by teachers such as yourself, as well as areas that could benefit from more support and professional development opportunities. You will be given a summary of the research and the final research thesis will be available online.

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

Some early childhood teachers were aware of my particular research and expressed an interest, and my details were passed on through a snowball methodology, as well as networking through personal contacts. The recruitment process involved selecting early childhood teachers working in south Auckland centres, as this is an area where a large number of Pacific children attend early childhood centres. Teachers with more than ten years experience were selected as they would have seen changes over the years in accountability requirements from government initiatives, as well as an increased focus on Pacific children and quality education requirements for this group.

What will happen in this research?

Once the invitation to participate in this research is accepted, I will make telephone contact with you to arrange a brief meeting. In this meeting I will be able to discuss the research in more detail and clarify any questions you may have. If you are willing to take part in the research, an interview consent form will be given to you to sign and a suitable time will be made for the interview.

What are the discomforts and risks?

1. If you experience any discomfort for any reason at any time, you may choose to withdraw from the interview process and no pressure or questions will be asked. All your information and identity will remain confidential.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You will be asked if you wish to continue and your choice to continue or not will be respected. Counselling and support provided by AUT will be available should you require it.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of this research include giving an opportunity for early childhood teachers to voice their experiences and give insight into the many challenges faced in this area of their practice. This can lead to potential strategies and further support given to teachers who work within the early childhood education

What are the costs of participating in this research?

You will be asked to give one hour of your time for the interview. Once the interviews have been transcribed you will be invited to provide clarification and feedback on any questions that were discussed.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will be given 2 weeks to consider this invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You will be required to complete a consent form. This will be provided to you once face to face contact has been established and the research has been explained to you in depth.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Once the research has been completed I will provide you with a summary and details on how to access the thesis online.

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 Chris Jenkin,

Chris.jenkin@aut.ac.nz,

+ 64 921 9999 extension 7911

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

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?***Researcher Contact Details:***

Primary Researcher – Jasmin Jattan

Email – jasmin.jattan@aut.ac.nz

Phone: 021 0223 6821

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12 November 2013, AUTEK
Reference number 13/320

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form



*Project title: **Mainstream early childhood teachers and their understanding of Pacific education.***

*Project Supervisor: **Chris Jenkin***

*Researcher: **Jasmin Jattan***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 19 September 2013
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participants Name

.....

Participant Signature

.....

Participants Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12
November 2013 AUTECH Reference number 13/320***

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

Appendix C: - Indicative Questions

The following seven questions were asked to each participant in semi-structured interviews in regards to Pacific education in their centres;

With a lot of focus on quality education with Pacific children, what are some of your ideas and thoughts on quality education or practice with Pacific children?

What type of changes have you seen over the years with Pacific education in early childhood or in general?

Currently, what is happening in your own centre in the area of Pacific children?

How do you incorporate Pacific understandings into your own practice?

Are there any specific challenges you may have encountered in this area (Pacific education)?

What would you suggest to resolve some of these challenges (if any)?

Is there anything else you would like to share on this matter (Pacific education)?