



Australian Government

FINAL REPORT Improving Literacy Outcomes for Samoan–Australian Students in Logan City

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Executive Summary

The project, “Improving literacy outcomes for Samoan-Australian¹ students in Logan City schools”, was funded through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Projects Initiative: Round Three, in 2006. The project aligned strongly with two of the focus areas nominated for DEST’s initiative. These were to:

- implement stronger and better defined links between schools and their communities to improve literacy outcomes; and,
- identify teaching/other support strategies to improve the performance of underachieving groups, as identified by the national benchmarks or other appropriate standards.

The project was conducted in Logan City, a multicultural city south of Brisbane. Of the 170 ethnic groups residing in Logan City, the Samoan group is the largest and one of the fastest-growing. Teachers in schools with a significant number of Samoan enrolments report that these students are disproportionately represented in populations of underperforming students and are at risk for not meeting nationally agreed benchmarks for literacy. This suggested a need for urgency in building knowledge about the literacy practices that Samoan children develop in home and community contexts in order to inform the literacy pedagogy of classroom teachers. The aims of the project were captured in two research questions:

1. How do we improve links between school and Samoan communities to improve literacy outcomes for students?
2. How can teachers encourage the performance of Samoan students so that students’ literacy outcomes are improved?

¹ The term "Samoan-Australian" refers to those Australians in this project who have Samoan background. Henceforth, in this summary the term “Samoan” will be used.

Research Design

This was a qualitative study consisting of two phases and conducted over 14 months between October 2006 and December 2007. Phase A involved a case study of five Samoan children using ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis, while Phase B used action learning/ action research (ALAR) methods.

The research focus of Phase A was understanding the literacy practices of Samoan students as they interacted in school with teachers and other students, and outside with families and community. Five Year 2 Samoan children aged 6 to 8 years – three boys and two girls – were informants for this phase of the project, along with their families and their classroom teacher. Data collected included audiotaped conversations and interviews, and videotape records of home/community and school events. Artefacts such as photographs the children had taken using disposable cameras were also collected.

Data analysis in Phase A involved repeated viewings of data with cross checking to establish domains and taxonomies of interest. Componential analyses then established attributes associated with categories of interest. Comparison and contrast were analytical techniques used to suggest themes. Videotaped events were reviewed with a particular focus on the multimodal elements of interactions. As needed, translations and explanations were provided by Samoan members of the research team. Analysis of videotaped events was framed by Halliday's (1973) model of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which is concerned with language function in social contexts. All findings were considered in relation to third-space identity (see Bhaba, 1994; Dobrenov-Major, 2007; Soja, 1996; Kostogriz, 2002). This allowed us to consider how students integrated, and on occasions kept separate, sets of cultural codes that concern learning and language use associated with both home–community experiences and practices at school.

The research focus of Phase B investigated ways of improving literacy outcomes for Samoan students through the professional development of teachers as they responded to the research understandings gathered in Phase A. In consultation with the school leadership team, a two-stage approach was used to address whole-school implementation. Working with action learning principles, teachers were invited to participate in the study. A core group of five teachers participated. Four of the teachers were based in the classroom and trialled a range of activities, tasks and approaches using action learning processes to monitor their effectiveness in improving literacy outcomes for their students. The fifth teacher was Head of Curriculum and assumed the role of liaison person with teachers and researchers. Teachers implemented at least three iterations of the action learning cycle in collaboration with the research team.

Data sets from teachers were gathered progressively over time. These consisted of field notes and teacher reflections, audio tapes, work samples and test results. We identified chains of evidence in the data as a means of establishing themes. In Phase B, student data were collected to provide evidence of improved practice. Literacy outcomes were measured using pre-test and post-test student data, State test results and teacher observations. A comparative analysis was used to establish evidence of improved literacy performance.

Major Findings

In the context of this project, there were four major findings that impacted on Samoan students' literacy performance.

1. On average, Samoan students in their final year of primary education performed below the state, school, LBOTE² and Indigenous mean

² Language Background Other Than English

scores in reading performance data reported in the Queensland 2007 State tests.

2. *Non-alignment* between home/community/church and school was a major factor in contributing to the literacy underperformance of first-generation³ Samoan students.
3. Teachers generally had limited understanding of the *non-alignment* issues that we found between home/community/ church and school for their Samoan students. However, when teachers understand the nature of *non-alignment* and are supported in reflecting on their practices, they have the capacity to enact change in their beliefs, dispositions and pedagogy.
4. There is an absence of any planned, systematic, cohesive response from schools, education training institutions and Education Queensland in addressing the needs of Samoan students and their teachers.

Each of these findings is discussed in the following section.

Finding 1: On average, Samoan students in their final year of primary education performed below the state, school, LBOTE and Indigenous mean scores in reading performance data reported in the Queensland 2007 State tests.

A significant cohort of Samoan students is at risk of not meeting nationally agreed benchmarks for literacy as these students progress through school. We believe that a response to these students' needs must involve early intervention and must stress the need for pre-school opportunities as three- and four-year-old children, prior to schooling. Samoan children need experiences to participate in teacher-led, play-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) activities that (a) promote the use of Samoan language as a means of providing a vehicle for conceptual and cognitive support; and (b) encourage familiarity with models of

³ First generation children are born outside Samoa with parents who were born in Samoa. Second-generation children have parents with Samoan-heritage who were born and educated in an English-speaking country.

English language which form part of the cultural capital that children from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture bring to school.

Early intervention may lead to alignment through the early phase of formal education. For example, opportunities for code-switching, which is a common community practice, should be provided during the early phase of learning to scaffold Samoan children's understanding of procedures and concepts. This should involve the appointment of bilingual teaching assistants. We believe these children will learn but need more time to align competing linguistic worlds. Time to learn is an issue aggravated when absenteeism is prevalent within this group.

Finding 2. *Non-alignment* between home/community/church and school was a major factor in contributing to the literacy underperformance of first-generation Samoan students.

In trying to understand the world of Samoan children and their community we became aware of how for them, "being Samoan" was very different from "being Australian". Being Samoan prioritised their regular participation in church groups and commitment to family. Further, the nature of being Samoan changed according to first- or second-generation perspectives. Within the first-generation group of four children in this project, there was further distinction. Three were bicultural and also passive bilinguals. This means they had receptive abilities but limited expressive abilities when using Samoan. Their Samoan output was typical of second-language output. However, their output in English was typically ESL⁴. These three children presented with two second languages. One first-generation child was bicultural and bilingual, while the second-generation child was bicultural and monolingual, speaking English only. We found that contending with two contrasting cultural orientations did not affect any of the children's sense of being Samoan. However, it did affect the first three children's capacity to succeed in school.

⁴ English as a Second Language

We found that effective language use, literacy practices and adult expectations of children in the home and community did not align with the expectations upon the children at school. There appeared to be *non-alignment* in the following areas: a multicode home-community environment with emphasis on non-verbal modes versus a school environment with an emphasis on written modes of language; code-switching in the home and community versus Standard Australian English as the dominant code at school; hierarchical and regulatory language functions with expectations of compliance in the home and community versus a range of language functions with expectations of critical response and participation at school; limited print resources in either language at home versus rich print resources in English language at school. However, there was alignment for recognition of underachievement at school. Views in the home and at school were both framed in deficit discourse, but there the alignment stopped. When accounting for the underachievement, parents said it was the child's lack of application and possibly God's will, while some teachers were more likely to identify language deficits, lack of world experience and parental support, and lack of motivation to achieve at school.

Our findings show that parents of first-generation Samoan students rely on memories of their own island education and do not know enough about how school systems function and what is expected of them in Australia. In line with their own experiences of schooling, these parents see school and home as separate entities and do not see advocating improved learning opportunities for their children as part of their role. Further, many of these parents lack the English language resources to do this.

As churches play a significant role in the lives of Samoan families as sources of values, practical information and socio-cultural experience, churches are well positioned to support the work of schools in developing parents' understanding of how schools work and to what ends. Discussion between members of school and

church communities, in familiar locations such as church sites, has the potential to provide a valuable forum to develop Samoan parents' understanding of:

- discipline procedures used in schools;
- the role of computers as a tool for learning;
- the importance of school attendance;
- the importance of developing Samoan language at home to facilitate development of English; and
- the benefits of maintaining the cultural tradition of oral storytelling as a home practice.

A key finding in the first phase was that members of both the Samoan and the school community have failed to recognise the students' *non-alignment* of language use, literacy practices and adult expectations of them in the home and community, and at school. We believe this is a result of many Samoan parents working from an intercultural perspective that was based on false assumptions and/or a lack of information. Similarly, teachers worked from a similar perspective.

Finding 3. Teachers generally had limited understanding of the *non-alignment* that we found among home/community/ church and school their Samoan students. When teachers understand the nature of *non-alignment*, and are supported in reflecting on their practices, they have the capacity to enact change in their beliefs, dispositions and pedagogy.

While Phase A identified the '*non-alignment*' that impedes the learning experience of many Samoan children, Phase B sought to identify how to improve these students' literacy outcomes. Professional development for teachers focused on this *non-alignment* and collaboratively identified ways of addressing this in their classroom practice. At the whole-school level, teachers identified a need to develop shared understandings about whom they teach, what they teach and how they teach. They identified a need for a consistent approach to teaching

across classrooms that included preparing these children in the genre of test-taking. This resulted in a whole-school initiative to document future policies to guide teachers in their work with students and community members.

Our key participants from Years 1, 3, 4, and 7 developed action plans that identified reading practices, oral language, classroom organisation, intercultural knowledge and parental involvement as areas to evaluate and improve. They collected evidence throughout the project that indicated their students' literacy performance generally improved. While a causal relationship between teacher practice and student performance has not been established, teachers reported improved on-task behaviour, persistence, and confidence in spoken language, and in reading and writing generally. Pre- and post-test results in oral language for Year 1 and in reading and vocabulary development in Years 3, 4 and 7 supported teacher findings in these areas.

To address alignment issues, teachers require a clear understanding of “Whom they teach”. This information underpins their ability to provide instruction that builds on the “funds of knowledge” that Samoan children bring to school.

Teachers' effectiveness relies on a supportive school community that:

- challenges deficit discourses that construct children and their families as lacking. Such practices encourage blame rather than suggest effective responses and devalue the potentially positive contributions that Samoan families can make to the life of local schools, communities and nation;
- avoids group stereotyping of Samoans. Multiple and complex factors, including immigrant status, gender, age and socio-economic status (SES) shape the identity of all individuals;
- considers the introduction of Samoan as a Language Other Than English;
- addresses absenteeism. While it is noted that Samoans give top priority to family matters, they must be provided with understanding of how extended absence from school will negatively affect children's learning and disrupts teaching for all in the classroom;

- develops whole-school policies that contribute to a shared and integrated understanding of “Whom we teach? What we teach? How we teach?”
- clearly identifies *non-alignment* between being Samoan and doing school in order to identify ways of creating alignment – through well-informed decisions about effective practices that meet the needs of Samoan students; and,
- supports the ongoing professional development of teachers and develops a culture of professional learning, and considers action learning as one approach that will support teachers in making informed decisions about how best to teach Samoan students.

Finding 4. There is an absence of any planned, systematic, cohesive response from schools, education training institutions and Education Queensland in addressing the needs of Samoan students and their teachers.

The education profession needs to show leadership in creating partnerships that work together to develop a planned, systematic and cohesive response to addressing the needs of Samoan students and their teachers. Teachers need the intellectual and cultural resources to support the literacy development of Samoan students. Teachers need to:

- have an expert understanding about the complex nature of teaching literacy in a diverse classroom;
- include opportunities for collaborative group work with explicit teacher talk to provide scaffolding for students’ oral language development;
- use culturally relevant resources to promote intercultural understandings;
- set high expectations while modelling processes and products;
- provide visual support for verbal explanations;
- develop opportunities to promote world knowledge and associated vocabulary through experiential learning and stimulating curiosity;
- promote an interest in words and their meaning in a range of contexts;
- engage students in reading as a meaning-making activity; and,

- establish students' familiarity with the genre of testing.

Educational training institutions have a significant responsibility in preparing teachers to work effectively in diverse classrooms. They should:

- provide a strong conceptual foundation across courses in the teaching of literacy that will be the basis for teachers, upon graduation, to work effectively in diverse classrooms with specific focus on developing intercultural communication skills;
- establish effective partnerships with schools that will provide pre-service students with a context to put into practice their theorised understandings about what constitutes effective teaching practices for underperforming students in the area of literacy; and,
- equip students with a capacity to think constructively about and research their own learning in the context of their school, classroom and broader life experience.

Policy makers within Education Queensland and nationally are urged to:

- review guidelines for ESL funding. Guidelines currently observe parameters such as time of arrival in Australia and country of origin rather than students' language proficiency and educational need;
- collect data about the educational factors affecting achievement of Samoan students. This will involve disaggregation of results for national literacy testing to identify levels of achievement for Samoan students;
- provide a collaborative, comprehensive response in terms of policy and strategic planning to improve educational outcomes for Samoan students;
- allocate additional resources to schools in low Socioeconomic Status (SES) areas with high populations of Samoan students; and,
- advocate a coherent approach to literacy teaching so that education sectors are able to work collaboratively with other government departments and

The outcomes of this project have implications for other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups living in low SES areas. In fact, there are implications on a national level because we as a nation are disadvantaged if we do not maximise opportunities to learn from newcomers and do not equip them to contribute to the common good of Australia.

Further research

This project has identified a group of underperforming students whose results are masked in State⁵ test results. In this report we have proposed ways of addressing this underperformance. Further research needs to be undertaken in different education contexts to replicate these results or to examine alternative approaches to improving student performance in literacy. This project used action research methods to support teachers in changing pedagogy and underlying conceptual understandings related to literacy in the curriculum. There are other approaches to professional development that need to be explored as potential methods to facilitate change. Tracking the effects of changed teacher practices on student learning needs to be monitored over time. In addition, the project raised other areas for research that include a need to better understand the following:

- development of teachers' intercultural sensitivity and expertise in literacy instruction;
- intergenerational difference;
- the role of family, church and school in supporting the alignment of 'being' Samoan and Australian; and
- absenteeism, its causes and effects.

⁵ Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy (Queensland Studies Authority)

Introduction

Samoans are the largest and one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in regional areas of southeast Queensland, including Logan City (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). We use the term “Samoan–Australian” to refer to Australian-born or New Zealand-born children of Samoan heritage who attend Australian schools. We make two distinctions within this group: (1) first-generation students born outside Samoa, whose parents were born in Samoa and have migrated to Australia directly or via New Zealand; and (2) second-generation students, whose Samoan-heritage parents were born and educated in an English-speaking context such as Australia or New Zealand. In this report we use the term “Samoan” to refer to all students of Samoan heritage.

Our project was conducted in Logan City, Queensland’s third-largest city with a population of 249,000, almost a quarter of whom were born overseas (Logan City Council, 2008a). Logan City is a multicultural city bordering Brisbane with representation of residents from 170 ethnic groups (Department of Child Safety, Queensland Government, 2007), and it is the local government in Queensland with the second highest number of humanitarian entrants (ACCES Services Inc., 2007). The suburb of Logan City in which the study was conducted is particularly characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity with 32% of the suburb’s population born overseas. The main language spoken at home, other than English, is Samoan. The suburb is also characterised by low-socioeconomic circumstances. Almost 47% of the population earn less than \$400 per week, 49% live in rented accommodation and 11.5% are unemployed (Logan City Council, 2008b).

Aims of the project concerned school literacy outcomes. Underpinning these aims is a view of “literacy” as a socially constructed process consistent with definitions provided by Gee (1992) and Luke (1993). Further, Halliday's (1973) functional model of language presents a notion of being literate within a socio

cultural framework where literacy and culture are fundamentally interlinked. Therefore in this project, our view of literacy recognises the role cultural and social contexts play in determining what it means to be literate and explores how students manage the literacy demands they might encounter in and across different contexts. It also recognises the transcultural meanings or hybrid literacy practices that emerge in the nexus of two cultures or in the intercultural differences between cultures. This third-space perspective (see Bhaba, 1994; Soja, 1996; Kostogriz, 2002;) provides a focus for the project.

Purpose of the Project

The project “Improving literacy outcomes for Samoan–Australian students in Logan City schools” was funded through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Projects Initiative: Round Three, in 2006. In line with objectives of this initiative, our purpose was to investigate ways to:

- implement stronger and better defined links between schools and their communities to improve literacy outcomes; and,
- identify teaching/other support strategies to enable the performance of underachieving groups, as identified by the national benchmarks or other appropriate standards as agreed with DEST.

Background to the project

Prior to their involvement in this project, members of the research team had worked with schools in Logan City to develop bilingual (Samoan–English) reading materials for use in homes and schools. During the course of this work, we encountered much anecdotal evidence from teachers and administrators about the academic underachievement of many Samoan students. While anecdotal, this evidence was consistent with findings of empirical studies conducted in diasporic Samoan communities in the United States (Janes, 2002) and New Zealand (McNaughton, Phillips & MacDonald,

2003; Comparative Education Research Unit, Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2004), and was consistent with reports of significant under-representation of Samoan students in pre-service Education programs at local sites.

A study involving 306 classroom teachers (see Kearney, Dobrenov-Major and Birch, 2005) found that less than 25% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with the academic achievement of their Samoan students. Teachers reported that some Samoan students performed quite well at school but generally these students were over-represented in the underachieving group and would typically be at risk of not meeting nationally agreed benchmarks for literacy. As part of this study, teachers' explanations of student underachievement were classified into five categories: (1) negative affect; (2) student misbehaviour; (3) literacy difficulties; (4) cultural difference; and (5) lack of resources (both material and human, where human resources included parental support for schooling and ESL-teaching support). While explanations by primary school teachers focused on students' literacy development and resource needs, negative affect and misbehaviour were more prominent in the responses of secondary teachers.

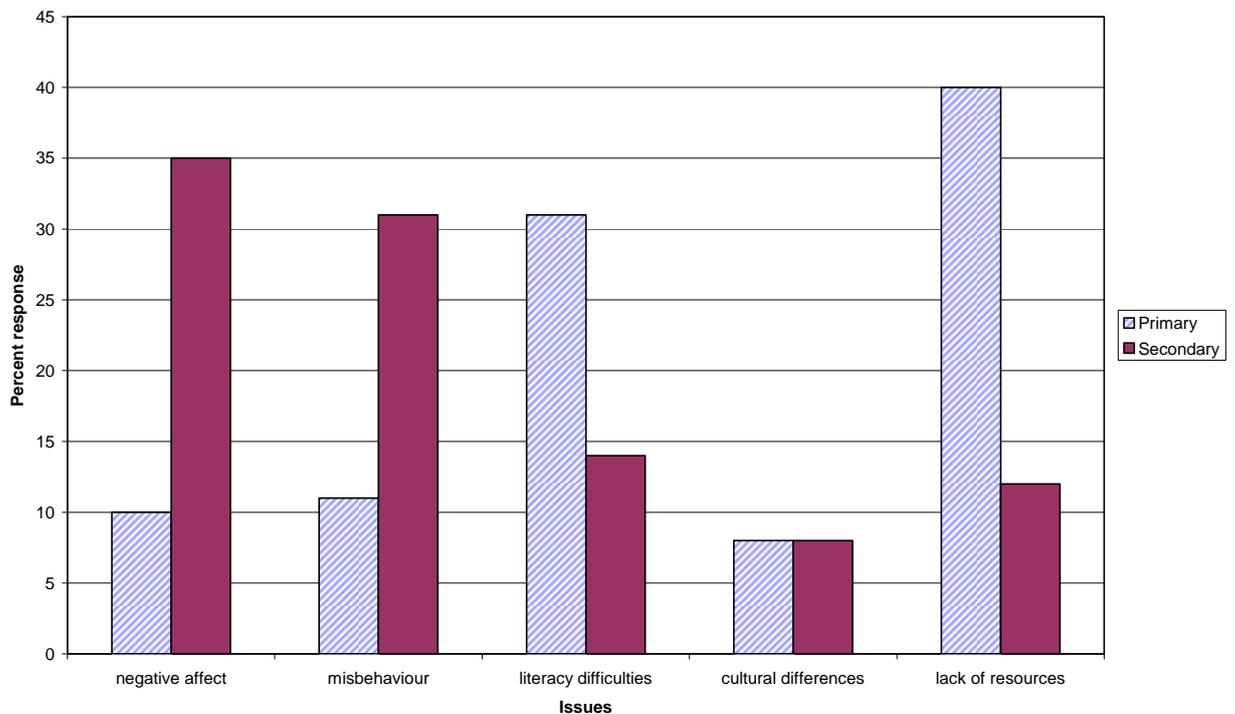


Figure 1. Primary and secondary teachers' explanations of Samoan student underachievement

As shown in Figure 1, explanations provided by primary school teachers differed from those provided by secondary school teachers. Emphasis on literacy pedagogy and its resourcing by primary school teachers shifted to a strong focus on negative affect and misbehaviour by secondary teachers. These data suggested a need for urgency in building knowledge about the literacy practices that Samoan children develop in home and community contexts, to inform the literacy pedagogy of classroom teachers. Two research questions provided direction for our project.

1. How do we improve links between school and Samoan communities to improve literacy outcomes for students?
2. How can teachers encourage the performance of Samoan students so that students' literacy outcomes are improved?

Literature review

Significant migration from the island region of Samoa since the 1960s means that now at least 50 per cent of island-born Samoans live overseas in diasporic communities (Gough, 2006). Research conducted in these communities suggests that use of language and patterns of socialisation for Samoan families differ from those dominant in mainstream Australian families. For example, caregiver-child interactions have been reported as situation-centred rather than child-centred and in contrast to those typically reported in Anglo, white, middle-class (AWMC) communities (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Duranti and Ochs (1996) identified three other significant differences. First, in Samoan communities, caregiving was hierarchical and distributed with many tasks achieved collectively rather than individually. Second, socialisation was conducted through repeated demonstration, prompting and action imperatives. Third, task completion was emphasised in preference to individual performance.

Typically then, Samoan families' understanding of social interactions and responsibilities differs markedly from the understanding that dominates mainstream Australian families and largely defines local school practices. Samoan families have a collectivist or communal orientation that gives priority to group needs (Mafi, 2005). This type of orientation associates with a sense of self that is relational and spiritual (Bush, Collings, Tamasese & Waldegrave, 2005). In contrast, mainstream Australian families are typically individualistic in that they promote an individual's self-interest and personal privacy while de-emphasising the needs of those who are beyond immediate family (Darwish & Huber, 2003). This orientation associates with a Westernised sense of self as individual and secular (Bush, Collings, Tamasese & Waldegrave, 2005).

It is not surprising then, that research has identified distance between teachers' and Samoan families' cultural understandings (Mafi, 2005). Similarly, Samoan students have reported feelings of confusion and frustration as a result of this distance (Va'a, 2003) with many constructing themselves as outsiders who are required to mediate different cultural codes while attempting to belong to both cultures (Tiatia, 1998). As Tupuola (2004) suggested, some Samoan youth opt for global identities where they emulate discourses of black or coloured American youth rather than persevere with the struggle to adopt an identity that reflects their genealogy and ancestry or one that fits with a local context in terms of mainstream expectations.

Difficulties may arise when values and beliefs underpinning practice in a school community are not shared and understood by students and their families. They are compounded when teachers are not aware of the possible disparity between their own values and those held by families whose cultural and linguistic background may differ from theirs (Barnard, 2003). Effective literacy instruction for children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds demands a meeting of minds between learners and teachers in classrooms (McNaughton, 2002), with continuity between "how things are done at school

and how things are done in the child's family and social setting" (p.20). This kind of continuity starts with acknowledgement of the significance of the family home as a site for the emergence of literacy practices that facilitate school achievement (Cairney, 2003), and a willingness to build on the "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004) that children bring to school.

Australia is a culturally diverse nation. Over 200 nationalities are represented in Queensland and almost one in five Queenslanders was born overseas (Department of Education Training and the Arts, 2008). With 10 per cent of Queenslanders aged over five years, speaking a language other than English at home, the "funds of knowledge" they bring to school may not prepare them for the school literacies they encounter.

Thomas and Kearney (2008) report that cultural diversity has become a feature of all institutions in a globalised society, including education. They emphasise that cultural, social and linguistic diversity found in schools is not matched within a teaching profession that reflects the dominant culture. Teachers may be teaching students whose cultural backgrounds and life experiences are very different from their own. For many teachers this is problematic as they are challenged to promote student understandings of cultural diversity as highlighted in the national goals of education (MCEETYA, 1999) where, "All students in schools will understand and acknowledge the value of cultural diversity and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from such diversity" (pp.3-4). Supporting this view is the expectation that teachers can and will design and implement learning experiences that enable children from all cultural groups to achieve academically (Education Queensland, 2000; Queensland College of Teachers, 2007). The challenge for schools and their teachers is to know what practices will achieve this.

National and international research reported in the literature over the past decade offers converging findings on what constitutes effective literacy

teaching. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998), in an effort to identify the approaches most effective for high-risk readers, found focused instruction was best for all students, regardless of student need. Teaching that provided intensive support for high risk learners and that focused on developing learners' understanding of the alphabetic principle, fluency, background knowledge and vocabulary; monitoring of learners' comprehension with 'fix up' strategies; and fostering learners' interest and motivation to read for a range of purposes contributed most effectively to learners' reading progress. The National Institute of Child Health & Human Development's (NICHD) comprehensive meta analysis of studies reported in the influential report "Teaching Children to Read" (National Reading Panel, 2000), supports these findings. However the NICHD argued that the majority of at-risk children will not 'catch up' unless they have systematic and intensive intervention in their schooling. It reported that more than 74% of at-risk Year 1 students will continue to struggle with reading as adults. Significantly, Lyon (2003, p.4) reports that early identification and intervention can reduce the percentage of under-performing readers to 6 percent or less by Year 4 at school.

The role of the teacher clearly is critical in improving the competence of at-risk students, with teachers accounting for significant variation in student performance (Wyatt-Smith & Gunn, 2007; Hattie, 2003). "In sum, teachers can and do make a difference – regardless of students' social backgrounds and 'intake' characteristics, and whether or not they have learning difficulties" (Cuttance cited in Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p.57).

Wyatt-Smith and Gunn (2007) identified expert teachers as having a deep understanding of literacy processes and who have the capacity to respond to diagnosed learning needs by explicitly teaching the literacy demands associated with tasks across the curriculum. These teachers recognise the role of classroom talk, motivation and engagement in literacy learning. They respond to student diversity and develop home–school partnerships.

In the context of Pan Pacific Islander (PPI) literacy education, factors evident in the work of expert teachers should be adopted in classrooms to progress students' literacy learning (Kearney, 2008). Airini, McNaughton, Langley and Sauni (2007) noted the ability of effective teachers to direct students' awareness to the requirements of activities. In profiling an effective 'high gain' teacher, these authors observed that such a teacher has: clarified high expectations, pushed students with complex tasks, introduced more complex and less familiar language including idiomatic uses, created a classroom community that enjoyed the use and study of oral and written language, exposed students regularly to rich and varied texts, and was able to incorporate students' cultural and linguistic resources, and clarify areas of confusion (p.35).

This profile of the approaches of teachers who are effective in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms is consistent with the approaches advocated by Au (2002) for teaching PPI students in the US; by McNaughton (2002) for teaching Pasifika students in New Zealand; and by Singh, Dooley & Freebody (2001) for teaching PPI students in southeast Queensland schools.

While there are important research findings that should inform teachers in their work with diverse students, there is little professional development for teachers to skill them in this growing area of need. We therefore discuss in the following section the role that professional development should play in teacher learning.

In the Queensland education sector, literacy reform has emerged as a key priority, informed by reports such as *Literate Futures: Report of the Literacy Review for Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 2000) that identified the need for action in four priority areas: student diversity, whole-school programs and community partnerships, future literacies, and the teaching of reading. The reform agenda seeking to address these areas has been driven by a variety of professional development programs implemented

since 2000. Responsibility for professional development generally has devolved to schools, where state-wide testing underpins professional development and focuses on improving student learning outcomes as measured by these test results

The literature reports convincing evidence that quality of teaching impacts on quality of learning in our schools (Department of Education, Employment, Youth and Training, 2000; Lingard & Ladwig, Mills, Barr & Warry et al 2001). Yet there is limited research on the relationship between teacher learning and student learning (Cohen and Hill, 2000). Hawley and Valli (2000) undertook extensive meta-analysis of research into teacher professional development and found that effective programs recognise that 1) schools are complex organisations; 2) learning is an interactive process; and 3) teachers are competent learners. However, they reported difficulties in finding evidence of how teacher learning is linked to student learning.

Meirs and Invargson (2005) investigated ten professional development programs across 70 locations over a 12-month period in an effort to better understand this relationship. They concluded that "evidence suggests that professional learning programs with a strong content focus, as well as an emphasis on other features such as follow-up, active learning, feedback and professional community are likely to show evidence of improved student learning" (p.84). However they also found difficulty in measuring improvement in student outcomes over a short time. Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1990) believed that what is missing from educational research "are the voices of teachers themselves, the questions that teachers ask, and the interpretative frames that teachers use to understand and to improve their own classroom practice" (p.7). They advocated practitioner research as an effective way to conduct professional development, providing teachers with the time and resources to conduct collaborative action research, often involving members of a university faculty (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Drawing on the work of Dick (1997), Fletcher (2003) and Zuber-Skerritt (2002), action learning can be defined as a collaborative learning experience where a community of practitioners come together to critically reflect on ways to improve their practice. It is transformative in that the learning is grounded in understanding experiences through a process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on the work of teaching.

Action research is a more formal approach to understanding action, where the process of changing actions is often the focus of research and results are published so they are available for public scrutiny. It seeks to research what contributes to more effective actions and to develop understanding of processes that facilitate this. Action research provides a means to investigate the effectiveness of action learning as a process to transform knowledge and act as a change agent for teachers' professional development (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). It may be undertaken by a group or an individual and often is facilitated by a critical friend who acts as a mentor and provides an outsider's perspective (Dick, 1997; 2002). Action Learning and Action Research (ALAR) can help its participants to learn how to do things better.

The US National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (www.nPEAT.org) identified a set of principles that synthesise current research on effective professional development programs. These principles are supported in an ALAR approach and were considered during Phase B of the project. They are that professional development should:

- focus on content developing what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning;
- be based on analyses of the differences between actual student performance on the one hand and goals and standards for student learning on the other;
- involve teachers in identifying what they need to learn to teach effectively and in developing the learning experiences in which they will be involved;
- be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching;

- be organised around collaborative problem solving;
- be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning—including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives;
- incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on learning outcomes for students and the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing understandings learned;
- provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory and concepts underlying the knowledge and skills being developed; and,
- be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.

The literature we have reported here informed our theoretical framework for this project and guided our research design, which we describe in the following section.

Research design

This qualitative study consisted of two phases and was conducted between October 2006 and December 2007. Phase A involved a case study of five Samoan children using ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis. As Anderson-Levitt (2006, p.282) suggested, “ethnography is useful in developing a valid understanding of local situations in all their complexity”. Phase B used ALAR methods. The effectiveness of ALAR methods in managing educational change is widely reported in the literature (see Fletcher, 2005; Fletcher & Hill, 2004; Kitson, Kearney & Fletcher, 2005) where the notion of ‘self-improving’ schools is grounded in the work of collaborative practitioner research. Table 1 provides an overview of the two-phase study with reference to research questions, methods and analytic tools.

Table 1: Overview of study

Phase A: Guiding questions	Site / Participants	Ethnographic data	Analysis
What counts as being Samoan? What counts as literacy for a young Samoan child? [Who participates? With whom? Where? When? Where? How?	Home: Children and families	Audiotaped conversations Artefacts Field notes Video recordings	Componential analysis identifying themes Multimodal contrastive analysis of events
	School: Children and teacher	Audiotaped conversations Interviews Artefacts Field notes Videorecordings	Componential analysis identifying themes Multimodal contrastive analysis of events
Ethnographic data feed into Action Research phase			



Phase B: Guiding questions	Stages of the ALAR Cycle
What do I know about the literacy needs of my students? What teaching practices will I implement to improve literacy outcomes for my students? What evidence will I collect to track the effectiveness of my practices?	Tackling a contradiction by introducing some aspect of change
	Monitoring the change
	Analysing data concerning the change
	Reviewing the change and deciding what to do next

The research focus of Phase A was on understanding the home and community literacy practices of Samoan students. The research focus of Phase B was investigating ways to improve literacy outcomes for Samoan–Australian students through the professional development of teachers as they responded to the research understandings gathered in Phase A. Effectiveness of the professional development in managing change was also evaluated systematically (Fletcher & Zuber-Skerritt, 2008). Our research design applied a case study approach (Yin, 1993) using ALAR methods (Fletcher, 2005). This approach provided a valuable opportunity to understand through close-range viewing the often specific and pragmatic practices involved in the educational context in schools, where “the aim is to get things done” (Stake, 1978, p.7). The 'doing' was action-oriented, exploring practices that had potential to improve learning outcomes for Samoan students. Within this case, there were embedded cases that formed discrete units of analysis. The units of analysis were teachers and students.

Phase A

Informants

Five Samoan children, aged 6 to 8 years, agreed to be our informants. The three boys (Afota, Benton and Donald) and two girls (Sieli and Noelani) were members of a Year 2 class. Their teacher, Maria, emphasised the diversity within her classroom:

I have 24 children in my class. I have seven Year 1 and Year 2 children. They range from five to eight years old. I've got four children that are eight. One's about to turn nine in February next year ... So there's quite a range of ages and a range of abilities. I have three children that have speech and language impairment in my class, a few children that have emotional problems in my class. I have a range of cultures including children Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan, Nigerian, Chinese, Laos, Cambodian, Maori, Torres Strait Islanders, Slavic, and we've got a couple of children ... white Australian – as well. (Audiotaped conversation, 31 October 2006)

The project site was Glynrod State School, with a population of 605 students and 22 teachers. At least 50% of students had a language background other than English, with more than 30 languages represented. The main language other than English was Samoan, and almost a third of the school population was born overseas. Several parents with children attending the school were challenged by poor financial circumstances.

We obtained agreement from the children and adults who participated in the study to participate as volunteers. To keep their confidentiality, we have used pseudonyms for informants and for the school.

Data Collection

In Phase A data were collected between 12 October 2006 and 22 December 2006, using a range of methods that included 20 hours of audiotaped

conversations and interviews and 18 hours of videotaped events. We also collected artefacts, including a mapping device that allowed conversation about the child's social context outside school (see Appendix 1 for an example), children's literacy products from home and school contexts, term reports, photographs and running records provided by the teacher. At least 60 photographs were taken by children using disposable cameras. We provided a list of suggestions to guide the children's photography (see Appendix 2 for the list). Collectively, these data helped to describe literacy events and practices for the five Samoan children as they interacted inside the classroom with teachers, and outside with families and community. See Appendix 3 for an overview of data collection associated with a chain of events. Figure 2 provides an overview of Phase A data.

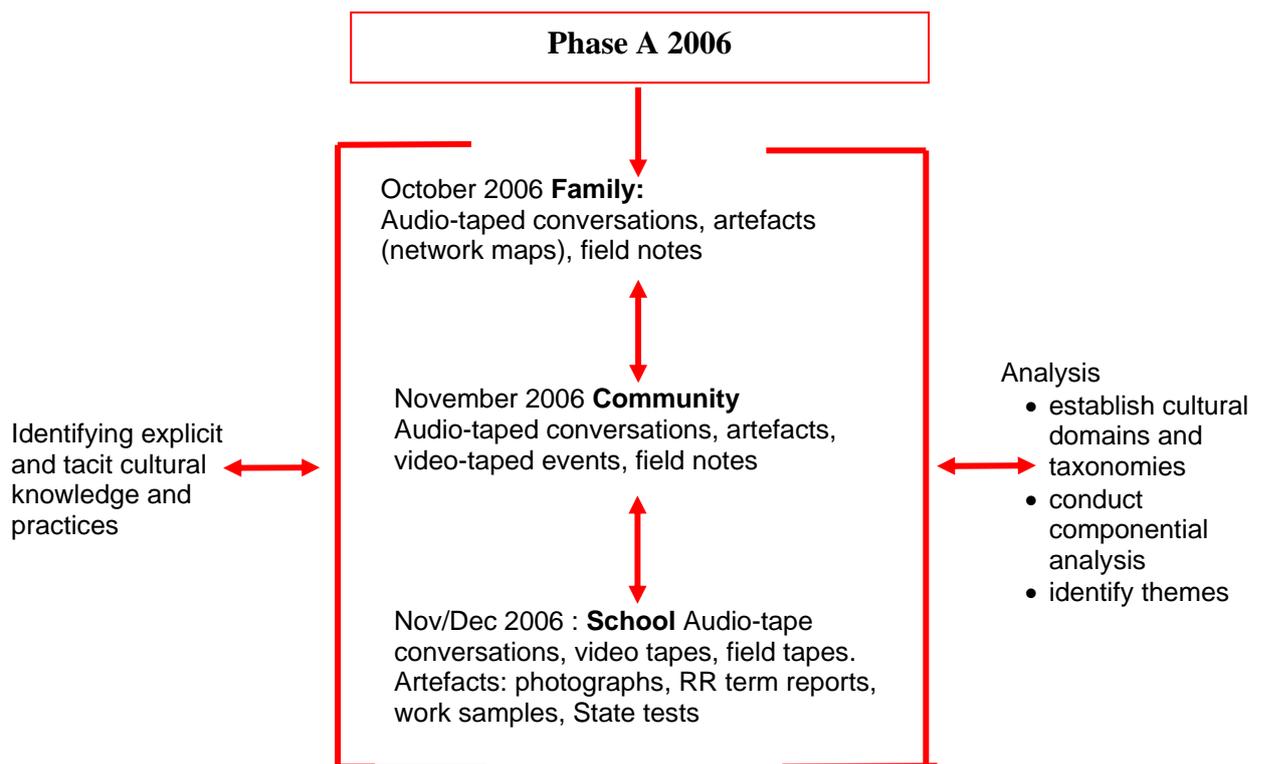


Figure 2. Overview of Phase A data

Data Analysis

Data analysis associated with Phase A involved repeated viewings of data with cross checking among members of the research team to establish

domains and taxonomies of interest. Componential analyses then established attributes associated with categories of interest. Comparison and contrast were used as techniques of analysis to suggest themes. See Appendix 4 for examples of componential analysis.

With videotaped events, a whole–part induction approach (Erickson, 2006) was adopted. This meant that entire events were viewed with significant episodes of interest identified for focused analysis. These were reviewed with a particular focus on multimodal elements of interactions. As needed, translations and explanations were provided by Samoan members of the research team. Analysis of videotaped events was framed by Halliday’s (1973) model of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Halliday’s model is centred on the notion of language function and is underpinned by the view that any language event is both communicative and socially purposeful while embedded within the broad context of culture and the social context of situation. Therefore, dimensions of contrast associated with concepts of (1) field: the content and ideas embedded in the literacy event; (2) tenor: the roles and relationships of those participating in the event; and (3) mode: how a coherent purpose is achieved through a set of language features. See Appendix 5 for samples of this analysis. In addition, all findings were considered in relation to third-space identity. This allowed us to consider how students’ meaning-making often lies between their home experiences and practices at school.

Phase B

Participants

While all teachers in the school contributed to this project at the whole school level, five teachers became key participants who worked as co-researchers during Phase B.

Teachers

In consultation with the school leadership team, we used a two-stage approach to address whole-school implementation. Guided by action learning

principles, we invited teachers to participate in the study. A core group of five teachers, representing year levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 became key participants and met with the research team on 21 March 2007 to discuss the Samoan students' home/community literacy practices that had emerged during the first phase of the project. The Year 1, 3, 4 and 7 teachers were classroom teachers while the Year 2 teacher had an additional role in the school as Head of Curriculum. Her role was to liaise with the teachers and the research team and she was the contact person who assisted in arranging meetings, teacher relief and delivering resources. As the Year 2 teacher had a range of responsibilities that relieved her from full-time teaching, data were not collected from her students.

Table 2. Teacher participants

	Cathy	Madeleine	Kara	Megan
Class	1	3	4	7
Years at School	3	2	3	8
Classes at site	3	3	5	7, 6, 4
Previous Teaching Experience	1 Yr at SSC C Grade 7	LOTE	1 Yr -SS B 1 yr - SS A	
Additional Roles			Science coordinator, softball coach, behaviour management, literacy and math committees.	Behaviour Management, Multi cultural committee, Playground Leadership
Curriculum Interests	SOSE, play-based learning, Early Years Curriculum	All areas	All Areas	SOSE, Art, Drama

Drawing on the understandings developing through Phase A and the work undertaken with our key participants, findings-in-progress were shared with the whole school during a student-free day allocated to this project for professional development. More than 50 classroom teachers, teacher aides and specialist teachers attended.

Students

Students in the classes of the Years 1, 3, 4 and 7 teachers participated in the project. The focus was on Samoan students, but all students were included in the project to provide comparative measures of student performance.

Data collection

Data sets involving semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and classroom observations were gathered progressively from key participants over time. Field notes and audio tapes were transcribed for analysis. These data collected evidence of teachers' practice and their experiences with ways to improve literacy outcomes for their Samoan students. An overview of the data collection is summarised below.

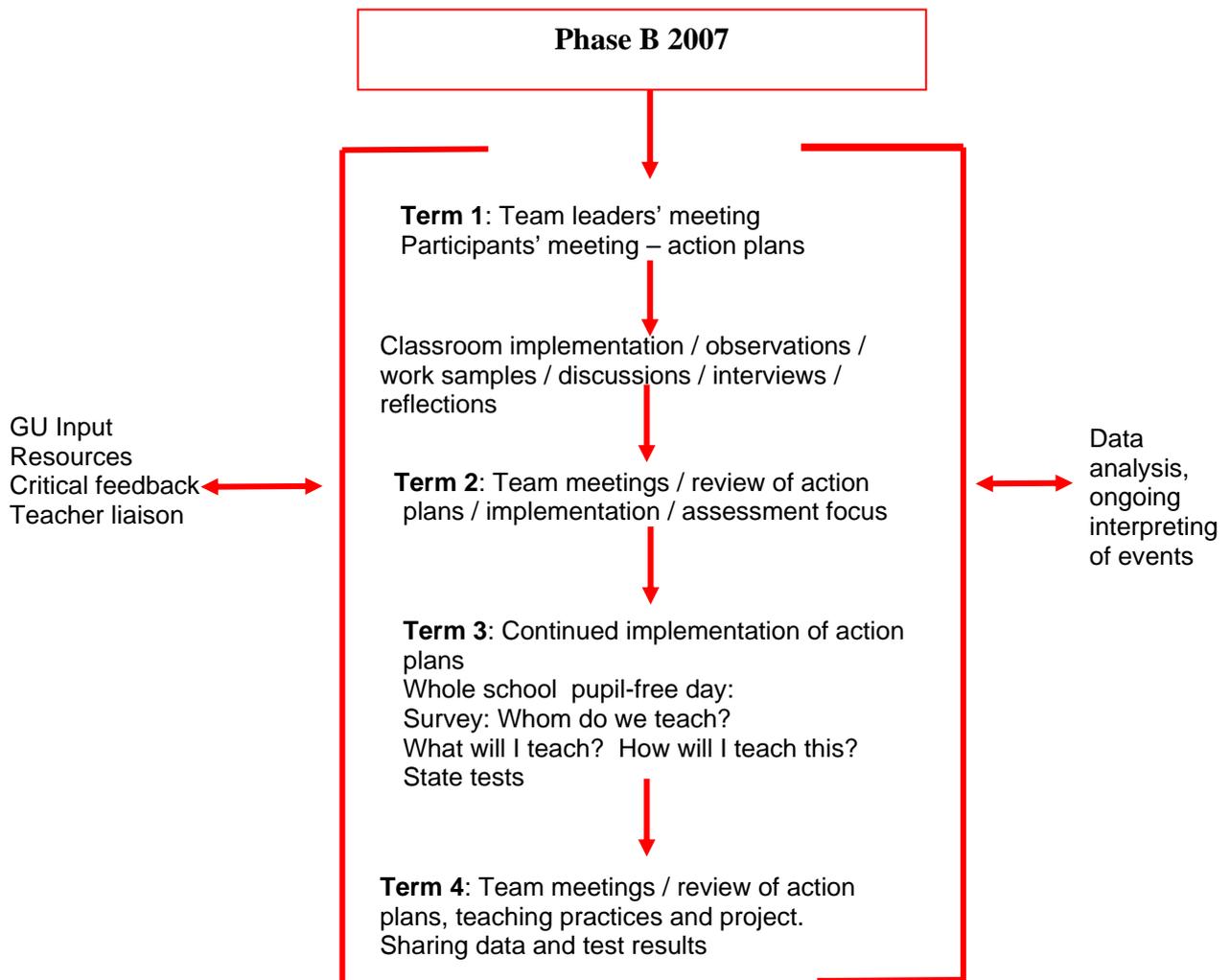


Figure 3 Overview of Phase B data

Student data were collected to provide evidence of improved practice. Three instruments were used.

1. *The Sun Screener Speech and Language Screener for Year 1*

Students.(2003). This was a normative assessment comprising various subtests that assess language, pragmatics, and phonological awareness. It was compiled in 2003 by Speech Language Pathologists working within Education Queensland.

2. *The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and*

Vocabulary (ACER, 2001) for Years 3–7. This was a normative measure that provided an estimate of a student’s level of reading comprehension and level of vocabulary.

3. Whole-school data were examined using the annual state-wide tests in Queensland that were conducted in Term 3, 2007. For comparative purposes, 2006 state results were also considered.

Pre- and post-test data are summarised in the table below.

Table 3. Overview of Pre-test and Post-test data

Year	Pre-test Instrument		Post-test Instrument	
1	June 2007	The Sun Screener Speech and Language Screener for Year 1 Students	Dec 2007	The Sun Screener Speech and Language Screener for Year 1 Students
3	June 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 1	Dec 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 2
4	June 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 1	Dec 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 2
7	June 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 3	Dec 2007	The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary - Form 4

Data analysis

The focus of Phase B data analysis was to implement practices and account for individual change that might contribute to improved learning outcomes for Samoan students.

Data sets collected from teachers and their classrooms were part of the 'observation' action learning cycle and were progressively analysed to inform and guide the action learning cycle. The large corpus of data consisted of field notes and reflections, audio tapes, work samples and test results.

All participants worked dynamically as critical friends, facilitators and learners, while key participants engaged in trialling practices. Observation field notes provided data that informed the research process and grounded findings in the reported experiences of participants. Observations formed the basis for reflection and theorising of change as evidenced in teacher talk, survey data, and artefacts collected during the project.

Field notes were summarised and audio tapes were transcribed. These multiple sources of data were used to triangulate findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and increase credibility (Patton, 1990) of data interpretation. Using the inductive analytic process described by Yin (1993) as pattern matching, data were compared systematically to establish converging or diverging evidence from various sources. Pattern matching identified chains of evidence in the data that established consistent and repeated themes. These themes were coded and provided categories of evidence that were included in the iterative ALAR process and illustrated teacher experiences, actions and change. This reflected Lincoln and Guba's (1985) description of the process. As new insights emerged, coding was refined by "filling in" or adding categories with the team. These insights focused on understanding if and how teachers can adjust their practices to enable the improvement of literacy outcomes for their Samoan students.

Literacy outcomes were measured using pre-test and post-test student data, State test results and teacher observations. A comparative analysis, within and across categories was used to establish evidence of improved literacy performance.

Findings

Phase A

The role of the church

Church played a significant role for each of the families. Parents saw the church as providing opportunities for children's development of Samoan literacy and cultural knowledge. Children attended services and participated regularly in practices that involved singing, dancing, and acting out Biblical stories. Children were required to memorise Biblical passages. Afato's mother acknowledged that memorisation of the Samoan passages challenged many children, saying, "Sometimes it's hard for the children to learn the language but we explain in simple English what we mean" (Field notes, 12 October 2006). Maria, the Year 2 teacher, recalled that the children would bring in trophies won for knowing Biblical phrases. She acknowledged the important role of the church for her Samoan children, saying "They are very big church goers and they'll often have church events. I heard so much about their White Sunday" (Audiotaped conversation, 31 October 2006).

A church presence was also noted at social events. For example, at a sixtieth birthday celebration, church officials were treated as privileged guests. The bishop proposed the speech to the birthday guest. At large social gatherings and informal meals in the home, a blessing of the food or a prayer of thanks was offered. There was much evidence that the saying "Samoa is found on God" has transferred to Samoan immigrant communities in Logan City.

The importance of family

All five Samoan children had many relatives living locally, whom they saw regularly. Older married siblings were frequent visitors to the family home. In Benton's case, older siblings and their children shared the family home. Extended family who lived overseas in New Zealand or Samoa were important, with Sieli's mother explaining that she had been helping an Auntie pack a container of goods that would be sent to Samoa (Audiotaped conversation, 26 October 2006). A strong collectivist orientation was evident. We were told that:

Samoan families always stick together. They share everything. The extended family helps. It is a give and take culture. For example, guests bring gifts to a funeral – food, money – and when the funeral is finished they equally share the leftover food and whatever gifts are there (Field notes, 16 October 2006).

Family roles were defined clearly. The Year 2 teacher believed that “Fathers are the figurehead with discipline ... Mum is precious. They all love their Mum - and the boys (in particular) very much” (Audiotaped conversation, 4 November 2006). A similar view of motherhood was conveyed at the sixtieth birthday celebration where the bishop spoke of mothers as “the heart of a family”, constructing them in terms of the Old Testament description of a virtuous woman (Videotaped event, 8 December 2006). We learnt of special relationships between brother and sister with a sister referred to as “the pupil in a brother's eye” (Field notes, 12 October 2006). The Year 2 teacher described a different set of expectations for boys and girls. She thought that many Samoan boys masked their emotions and explained that “It's got to be manly ... there is an exaggerated macho image amongst the Samoan boys”. The teacher described different expectations for girls saying, “like we'd have cases where mum's just had a baby...Grade 1 last year... Mum just had a baby. They had an older brother, in Grade 7, but it had to be the Year 1 that stayed home to look after mum. Not the older kid, but her because she was a girl ... and she's five” (Audiotaped conversation, 4 November 2006).

The teacher commented on the collective orientation within families:

They are very communal... They may not have their homework done and it might be because they slept in someone else's bedroom that night. So it might not be 'this is my bedroom, this is my bedroom'. You might have lots of people sharing that bedroom or they might be in different houses because you know the extended family is very big ... if the homework's not here it could be in my cousin's house or my aunty's house, and they'll get it next time they're over there. So the same with money and food. It's very communal. What's mine is yours.

(Audiotaped conversation, 2 November 2006).

The children's sense of extended family was evident. They used terms such as "Aunty" to refer to women other than siblings of parents. Talk between Afato and Benton, in relation to one of the Samoan researchers participating in the classroom, is illustrative:

Afato: Miss, Aunty, can you help me?

Benton: Her name is not Miss. She is my Aunty.

(Videotaped event, 7 December 2006).

This exemplifies the difficulty Afato has with using language across contexts. The title "Miss" used in school and the title 'Aunty' used in home creates confusion for Afato as he traverses a changing linguistic landscape where roles and relationships become blurred.

Differences between first- and second-generation families

Differences were observed between children from 'first generation' families and children from 'second generation' families. In first-generation families, adult family members spoke with children in Samoan but the children used English with their siblings, whereas children in second-generation families used English at all times. The average number of children in first-generation families was 5.75. The child from the second-generation family had no

siblings. Parents in the first-generation families were employed in service industries and factories while parents in the second-generation families worked in retail. Children in the first-generation families spoke of doing household chores, whereas the second-generation child did not. He reported playing games on the computer, playing with a pet and eating out regularly with cousins. In contrast, the first-generation children spoke of church-related social activities.

Language use and literacy practices at home and in the community

Noelani's mother explained that her family spoke Samoan at home so that the children would not lose Samoan language. While all first-generation parents reported that Samoan was the home language, reports provided by children from two of the families differed. The children indicated that while parents spoke Samoan to them, English was their home language. In addition, their classroom teacher believed that the home language for all five students was English but this was true only for Donald, the second-generation child. Only Donald's mother was able to sustain a conversation in English with members of the research team. For the other families, there was much code-switching and need for conversation, in Samoan, with Samoan members of the research team.

When first-generation children were asked what sort of things their parents spoke to them about in Samoan, Sieli replied, "Turn off the TV". Benton responded, "Wash your hands". This suggests a regulatory function where Samoan language is used to direct behaviour. Benton and Noelani said that they were confident speaking Samoan to their parents. Benton, the only child developing print literacy in Samoan, was the only one able to sustain a conversation in Samoan. The other three first-generation children were passively bilingual. This means that they had receptive abilities but limited expressive abilities when using Samoan. Thus, the field of conversation needed to be highly contextualised and restricted to household vocabulary

and expressions. Their use of Samoan was devoid of the vocabulary and language patterning that typically characterises written text-types, or that facilitates conceptual and cognitive development on a broad scale.

Sieli's mother explained that her daughter had only the Bible as a Samoan text. She said, "It is hard to read the Bible. It is too hard to understand" (Audiotaped conversation, 20 December 2006). We observed few other print resources in homes. Three texts, written in Samoan, were identified. As Sieli's mother had indicated, there was the Bible. In Afato's home we were given a set of church songs written in Samoan, and in Noelani's family we were shown a copy of the *Weekend Samoan*, a New Zealand publication with eight of its 32 pages providing articles in Samoan. Photographs taken by children provided examples of three English children's books: *My Bible Friends*, *Clifford's First Christmas* and *Dinosaurs*. While print resources in Samoan or other languages were limited, a television and video player were present in all homes, with children saying that they enjoyed watching cartoons. The three boys played with X-boxes. Where a computer was available in the home, the parents gave priority to older siblings. Noelani advised us that "The little kids might wreck it" (Audiotaped interview, 13 November 2006).

Hierarchical use of language was apparent during many videotaped events. Males tended to be the speech makers at community functions. Their language use included use of puns, alliteration and rhyming. The only child-centred interactions involved music and dance. Children's use of non-verbal language was emphasised, with expression of thoughts and feelings conveyed via dance. Children did not express their ideas verbally at public, social events. At the sixtieth birthday party, the oldest male child acted as MC but none of the 36 grandchildren spoke. A similar pattern of interaction was observed in the video of the church camp. At church services such as the wedding and funeral, children were listeners, not speakers.

The context in many Samoan homes was multi-coded with frequent use of code-switching in Samoan and English. For example, children played in English while their father spoke Samoan on the phone. The father switched back to English to tell his son to put on his shoes then continued his phone conversation in Samoan. Code-switching had a pragmatic function in that it aided parents' explanations to children. It was also used randomly. For example, Donald's Mum in the middle of an English conversation with her son, started to look for the TV remote-control device. She asked, "E fele mea?" which is translated as "Where is it?" (Videotaped event, 21 December 2006). Noelani demonstrated habitual code-switching when talking about her photographs to a Samoan researcher. She explained: "Ole pepa biscuit lea. ... O au male sister Lili. ... O ma le sister ma le brother" (Videotaped event, 22 December 2006).

In the language data there was evidence that Samoan first-generation students used analogy, overgeneralisation of rules, or blending of rules, and shifted them from one language to the other. In other words, there was strong interference between the two languages. The most common case of interference described in the relevant literature is that the first language interferes with the second. However in Noelani's interview about the photographs, reverse interference was noticeable. Namely, her second language, being English, interfered with her Samoan. She used: "O au Noelani kusi kusing" as a comment on a photo with the intention to say: 'I am Noelani writing'. The correct clause should have been realised as "O au Noelani tusi tusi". She added the English -ing morpheme to the reduplicated word. With this, she attempted to turn the second "kusi" in an '-ing form' in analogy to the English structure of "I am writing". This example also revealed that Noelani acquired Samoan via the aural channel only and that is why she used 'kusi kusing' that shows auditory similarity with 'tusi tusi'. This allows us to hypothesise that both languages are second languages for Noelani. She does not seem to possess a reliable reference point, a sound knowledge of her first language, and that is why she applies her English language experiences to Samoan or in some occasions the other way around, her

Samoan language experiences to English, for example in the case of unmarked plurals or dropped copular verbs.

Children used simple relational processes when describing, in English, the photographs they took in their home and community. Benton, who had the strongest level of English literacy, reported, “This is my bedroom”, “This is my brother” (Audiotaped conversation, 23 November 2006). Little of his elaboration involved more complex linguistic structures, even though prompts were provided.

Language and literacies at school

The Year 2 teacher identified key strategies that supported the learning ability of her Samoan students. These included (1) visual support for verbal explanations; (2) high expectations; (3) explicit instruction with an emphasis on modelling both products and processes; and (4) extra time with the same teacher. As for the ‘same teacher’ factor, the Year 2 teacher had taught the children in Years 1 and 2 and saw a familiarity/time advantage for the students; they had established relationships and thus familiarity with her in Year 1 so there was more time for teaching and learning in Year 2. She noted the importance of collective experiences involving collaborative group work for Samoan children. She predicted: “If they’re in a sit-down classroom where they have to be quiet and they’re not doing group work ...where they can’t interact with each other or other children, I think it’s going to impact negatively on them. I think the interaction with the others is really important to that group” (Audiotaped conversation, 2 November 2006).

All five children constructed reading as “getting it right when you read it out loud” and indicated to us that they did not like to read aloud. This view was supported by analysis of running record data. These records showed students’ limited reliance on semantic and syntactic sources of information when reading, with a low rate of self-correction. In terms of Luke and Freebody’s

(1999) description of the Four Resource Model, the children were “code-breaking” at the expense of “meaning making”. Noelani particularly struggled. She had been nominated for a place in a Reading Recovery program but lost her place because of extended absences from school.

The school lacked culturally relevant reading material for Samoan students. In an earlier project, members of our team had worked with schools and Samoan church groups to develop collaboratively a set of bilingual children’s books (see Appendix 6). These proved popular with Samoan students, who were excited to work with books that told their cultural stories and to identify the authors and illustrators as relatives and friends. In this project we observed how using the bilingual books helped to expand the children’s vocabulary, through identifying unfamiliar meanings of words they knew. For example, when reading *Rona and the Moon*, a traditional tale that explains the surface features of the moon, children were confused by the word “well” as a homonym. A member of the research team noted:

There were several words that they didn’t understand either in English or Samoan. One was the fact that the mother used a bucket to get water. You know, when they turn the tap on they get water, so why does she need a bucket? And what on earth was a well? Their understanding of “well” meant you weren’t sick. So why was she going with the bucket to the well? So it took a little bit of explaining that a well is a hole in the ground where people might go to get water (Field notes, 5 December 2006).

Clearly, the lack of appropriate, culturally relevant resources contributed to the problems the teachers were experiencing and limited the teachers’ capacity to address students’ literacy problems. We observed that teachers responded in their own ways, as best they could, to these circumstances. For example, the Year 2 teacher used her own money to buy resources that she felt would help develop the children’s world knowledge and English vocabulary. The problem of insufficient resources extended beyond appropriate reading materials to

insufficient suitably skilled teaching staff. Some of the five children demonstrated legitimate language needs but were not eligible for ESL support because in Queensland schools this support is subject to guidelines that exclude these children.

Family beliefs about learning

We spoke with families about their children's learning. Sieli's mother explained how her daughter learned in the home. She said, "She copies what people do; she's a child who learns quickly. She is good; she wants to do what I'm doing". We probed about what Sieli learned at home. Her mother replied, "Cleaning her room, washing dishes, cutting grass, minding the baby – changing nappy, picking up rubbish". Afato's mother emphasised that home and school had separate functions. Both mothers compared their own Samoan schooling with their children's Australian schooling. Sieli's mother explained:

Children have every opportunity for success (here) but they are not so dedicated. Here children don't work so hard as in Samoa. There [in Samoa] children don't use computers. They need to find the right answer themselves. They have no computers to get the answers and just copy them. In Samoa they have to struggle to find the answers (Translated audiotaped conversation, 20 December 2006).

Afato's mother added:

In Samoan schools children get inspected every day in terms of hygiene, e.g. nails, ears and tidiness of uniform – whether it is clean and ironed. In Samoa, first they prayed in the school, then worked, read, wrote, had sports. Children were expected to know what the teacher said. Here in Australia the kids listen to their parents but don't listen to their teachers. Here, the school buys them books. They have pencils – as many as they want and they see a lot of things and they want them. They have many books here. In Samoa there was only one book and you went home for lunch to eat at home. Here lunch is in

school. In Samoa there was only one meal or sometimes no meal at all. But children there are happy, and (here) they have much more but they are not happy here (Translated audiotaped conversation, 31 October 2006).

The mothers recognised the importance of education for their children. Afato's mother explained, "I didn't finish school so my children should, because children have to work here. They can't live here without work, not like in Samoa. It's harder here now than before. It is up to the children to choose their profession ... We encourage him (Afato) to go to school and study well but everything is in the hands of God" (Translated audiotaped conversation, 31 October 2006).

While education is seen as important, there was no parental agency in fostering success at school. Parents did not assign agency to themselves, the teacher or the school. Success at school was dependent on the child or God.

Third-Space Identity

A third-space perspective provided a focus for the project. Here we propose a third-space identity for three of the Samoan children from first-generation families: Afato, Sieli and Noelani. We exclude Donald and Benton from this perspective. As a second-generation Samoan, Donald is monolingual in English while Benton is a first-generation Samoan, developing bilingually. As shown in Figure 5, third-space identity emerges for Afato, Sieli and Noelani as these children integrate two different sets of cultural codes associated with learning and language use. These children are bicultural but they are not developing bilingually. In fact, we see them working with two second-languages. This situation has implications for their cognitive and conceptual development and makes engagement with English texts very challenging for them.

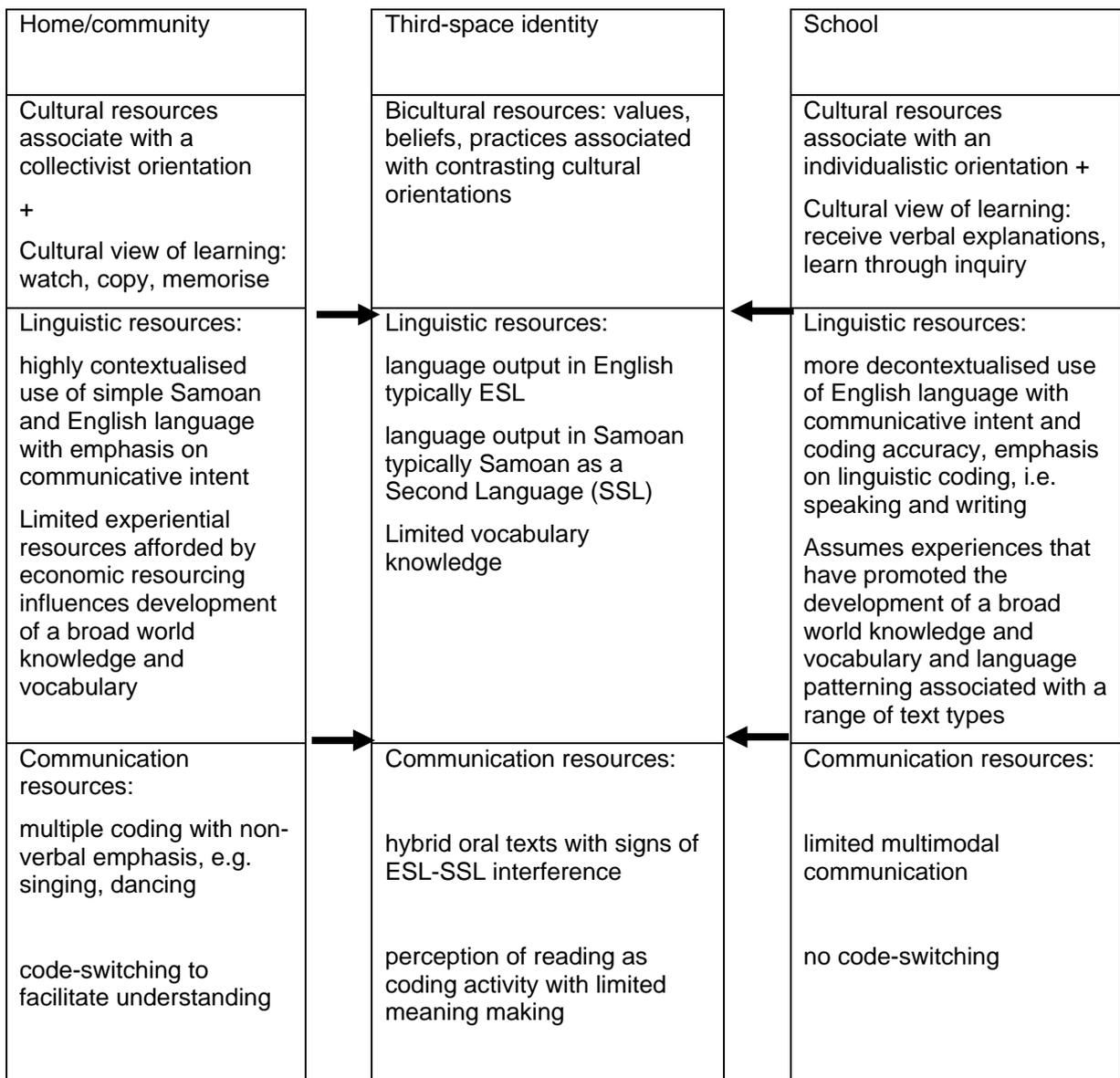


Figure 4. Third-space identity for Afato, Sieli and Noelani⁶

Phase B

Teachers

All teachers progressively developed and implemented action plans throughout the teaching year. These plans were working documents where teachers identified specific areas they intended to implement in an effort to

⁶ We acknowledge children's unique identities but suggest these as generally conforming to the identity described in Figure 4.

improve literacy outcomes for all their students, with a specific focus on their Samoan students.

Table 4. Summary of action plans

Year level	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Year 1	<p>Oral language focus: structured: show and tell.</p> <p>Improve communication with parents - messages on door, etc.</p>	<p>Extension of students' oral language ability including knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure, and the use of questions to express ideas.</p> <p>Guided reading - on task behaviour.</p> <p>Sports day with parents involved.</p>	<p>Modelled writing: information reports.</p> <p>Focus on questioning using barrier games (activities that develops listening skills, procedural and positional language)</p> <p>Parents to attend make-and-take activities using core words.</p>
Year 3	<p>Children's comprehension of variety of texts and graphs (preparation for Year 3 Tests).</p>	<p>Promoting language of maths.</p> <p>Developing children's comprehension and ability to analyse food packaging and recipe texts.</p> <p>Motivating reluctant readers - book selection.</p> <p>Working with procedural texts and report writing.</p>	<p>Scaffolding writing of a sports narrative.</p> <p>Oral language- vocabulary - barrier games.</p> <p>Parents: make-and-take activities using core words with Year 1 parents.</p>
Year 4	<p>SRA cards.</p> <p>Speed reading.</p> <p>Direct instruction.</p> <p>Have students skim/scan and identify keywords/ phrases.</p>	<p>Developing literal comprehension strategies to help students understand what they have read.</p> <p>Modelled reading using big books and large texts for the whole class. Activities to extend prior knowledge.</p> <p>Encourage students' enjoyment of reading.</p> <p>Communication with parents encouraging them to support children at home.</p>	<p>Implement specific strategies to assist in developing inferential comprehension skills. Think and search.</p> <p>Communication with parents encouraging them to support children at home (Christmas celebrations).</p>
Year 7	<p>Improve comprehension skills for ESL children</p>	<p>SRA cards.</p> <p>Speed reading.</p> <p>Direct instruction.</p> <p>Identifying key words.</p>	<p>Modelling strategies to help students through guided application.</p>

These plans evolved and were extended, adapted or modified throughout the study, to accommodate developing understandings, changing needs and school priorities. Throughout this process, members of the research team liaised with the curriculum co-ordinator and the teachers involved to discuss emerging ideas and possible directions, and to share resources. This contributed to our monitoring of the project and the effectiveness of ALAR approaches in supporting teachers in changing their practices. Field notes and audiotapes were used to record progressive developments and reflections.

Throughout the year, members of our research team visited the teachers' classrooms as critical friends and offered feedback and resource support based on our observations. This stimulated thinking among teachers and research team members about existing practices and provided a focus for changing these practices. The results reported below are based on field notes, meetings and interviews.

Reading practices

All teachers focused on examining their teaching of reading to improve students' reading. For example, after observations and discussion with the research team, the Year 1 teacher adapted her guided reading lessons in an effort to keep students engaged and on task:

Well, say at the beginning of the year we'd do a guided reading group where everyone's just reading a book. But the lower groups, they seem to be not improving much or they seem to forget from one day to the next what they were reading and they couldn't even get the pattern – like a simple one-to-one pattern. And M [researcher] like kind of said, "Why don't you try, like don't even worry about the books. Like take a sentence from the book because they're all pretty repetitive anyway, and have them do different activities with it, like have them writing it, have them cut it, have them moving it around and doing things with the board, like point to this word, so they're building up their reading skills

through recognising the words (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

This teacher felt the students had made some progress, claiming:

So we've been doing some of those [activities], and...there has been, like, we're quite impressed with the improvement. ... Um, like we're pleased with how many letters and sounds they've um [learnt]" (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

While this observation was supported by the student data, the teacher felt that her students were still underperforming and had a long way to go to reach the standards expected for their age. She introduced Samoan texts into the reading program, explaining that "I've tried different ways. The Samoan books were very good. They [students] understood them. I changed my reading groups. They are more on task. Reading was boring but it's better now" (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

The research team shared State test results with the teachers and analysed student responses in an attempt to understand what the students were doing as readers. This analysis became a major focus for the teachers as they recognised the need to teach their students the genre of test taking.

The Year 3 teacher identified a need to develop students' comprehension in preparation for the State test. The research team prepared resources for her to use and she explicitly modelled ways of answering multiple choice questions. She focused on developing understandings at the literal, inferential and applied level. She was also concerned about the students' lack of engagement with books and selected for the students reading books that she believed would interest and motivate them to read:

I've been militant about reading. And you know, I blitzed the books with them. I used the books to the max. ... When we do our reading, if I know there's a word that they don't understand I'll throw in what it

means. I don't stop the flow too much. But sometimes they may want to stop and have a bit of a discussion, so I just go with the flow. (Audiotaped interview, Year 3 teacher, 12 December 2007)

The Year 4 teacher also implemented reading strategies that reached beyond literal comprehension. In collaboration with the research team, she implemented rotational activities:

The students have to look at and read, either with her as guided reading, or as shared reading in a small group situation, where they can look at some information about our solar system. They then use that information that they've read about where they have to make inferences in relation to planets etcetera in our solar system, as well as looking at the sun and the moon a little bit more closely than what they normally would. (Field notes, 19 October 2007)

This teacher felt that the students were not yet independent readers and she wanted to encourage among the students a love of reading. She claimed, "My main focus has been on reading and if you can get them enthusiastic about reading – that's everything! (Audiotaped interview, Year 4 teacher, 12 December 2007)

Reading activities implemented by the Year 7 teacher scaffolded students' reading of, and response to, multiple choice questions:

We really did get stuck into that for several weeks prior to the Year 7 testing... And I think now that that should really be our focus. Working toward a particular goal like the Year 7 test. We should be working, looking at all the material involved. And looking at how to help the kids read that type of material. (Audiotaped interview, Year 7 teacher, 19 October 2007)

This teacher observed increased persistence in the students' answering of questions:

... now when we're working through comprehension sheets, because we had such a huge focus before the Year 7 test focusing on looking at the material, reading the material, looking at the questions, uh looking at "well you should start looking on the material" and that sort of thing, I've found now that they are more, sort of, motivated to get in and do the searching. So that's really good. (Audiotaped conversation, 12 December 2007)

The year 3, 4 and 7 teachers observed greater persistence in their students when completing tasks and tests. This was supported in all post-tests and State tests where generally students attempted all questions.

Oral language

The teachers in Years 1 and 3 worked with their students to develop the students' oral language skills. This was an ongoing focus in Year 1 as the teacher was unhappy with students' spoken language in her Show and Tell /morning talk session. After discussing with the research team about ways to modify the activity, she reorganised her morning language session to have students sitting in a circle and she structured the talk with the students. She then included an afternoon session that focused on language games. She consciously worked at developing conversations with the students rather than using the typical question-and-answer form of communication. The Year 1 teacher explained:

I take a personal interest [in the students]. I try to talk to them and find out more about their family. Talking about their family helps their language. If you remember things about them – [e.g.,] the dog's name – it gives them a purpose to practise their language and get a conversation about them going. (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007)

She reflected on the effectiveness of these changes:

Yeah, and with the oral language they... I just notice the children compared to the beginning of the year with what they would say... you know, how they would speak and the amount of language they would use has improved a lot. They um ... even just the content as well as the quality of their talking. (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

The Year 3 teacher began looking at the language of mathematics and this led to a focus on vocabulary for oral language. In the final term of the project she implemented barrier games and found the students developed more confidence in speaking, claiming, " Their confidence is developing... The kids are getting up and talking more; we need to do more of that" (Audiotaped interview, Year 3 teacher, 12 December 2007).

The year four identified several areas that she believed were effective in improving learning:

Buddy reading and silent reading is working well...They are getting there.....I teach to what the kids need. I've got them at a place where they will make an effort. I'm very organized. With oral language we have a weekly talk (Audiotaped interview, Year 4 teacher, 19 October 2007).

Classroom organisation

Teachers tried different ways to organise their classrooms to encourage greater participation and interaction with the students. Different groupings and seating arrangements were tried to see if this improved on-task behaviour.

The Year 1 teacher believed these changes improved the learning environment:

So we um, we've been pushing them. We've been working our room in a different way. I work in a double teaching space, and we have a double class really, so we've been, you know, ability streaming, and we

got concertina doors in the middle of the year... It is very difficult to have...noise and distractions... And we have noticed that say the children that are working at a high level, they have really excelled as well. Cos they're just working.

(Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

The Year 3 teacher noticed improved concentration, particularly when she selected engaging activities. "I'm amazed at how quiet they can be if they are interested in what they do. They work nicely together and they are cooperating" (Audiotaped interview, Year 3 teacher, 12 December 2007).

These observations guided her in her planning. Student absenteeism meant there was limited evidence that this translated into improved practice, but the teacher believed that generally her students had progressed

The Year 7 teacher also observed the effort that some students were making and the effect this had on their learning:

I've noticed from one of my kids. He's Samoan; Samoan–New Zealand. He's been very low right from the beginning. But, um, even transferring from, um, literacy to numeracy, he is improving so much in his numeracy, just with his multiplication tables, that he's been working on, and he's putting in so much effort. It's really lovely to see that it is transferring from one subject area to another. As in, the amount of effort he's putting in. (Audiotaped interview, Year 7 teacher, 12 December 2007).

However, this teacher found fourth term to be problematic, with increased absenteeism and students distracted by holidays and Christmas. She felt that generally her students still had a negative attitude toward school work. "I don't think their attitude's changed. Not a lot. No. There's still those same responses that they're giving" (Audiotaped interview, Year 7 teacher, 12 December 2007).

In the final term she allowed students to choose what project they would investigate. Her fourth term planning was an attempt to maintain student interest:

And then the children are going to have their own choice of program. Because... as in choose their own literacy project that they want to. You know, some idea that they want to work on. Because the Year 7s start to loose the plot very shortly. And if we give them something that they're interested in, they will get in and work on that project. But if we focus it on something we want them to do, we've got Buckley's. (Audiotaped interview, Year 7 teacher, 12 December 2007)

Intercultural knowledge and parental involvement

All teachers found the results from Phase A informing and helpful in developing an understanding of the out of school lives and experiences of their Samoan students. This helped to explain absences:

...what I will say is that I notice that if someone's been away, like I know one little boy, he's a Samoan boy, and um, like he sometimes is away, and like I always ask "Were you sick?" not so much to mark it on the roll but just to find out. And he'll say "No, I had to look after the little babies at home". He had to help mum, so he stayed home. So ... To us, we think "Oh the mum should be looking after them and not keeping the kid home from school". But now we understand that that's the culture. That family comes first, sort of thing. (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

The Phase A results also explained the limiting effects for some children whose home life centred around their community:

I've given them more experiences to write about – the visit to Sea World, Fairy Tale Ball, Pirates Day, dinosaur dig ups. It has given them more to write about. They just don't have the experience. When we visited Sea World, one of our Samoan boys said, "There are a lot of

white people here". (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

Teachers continued to make an effort to communicate with parents, with varying degrees of success. They found that school-based meetings and formal school communications were poorly received. They understood that this poor response was for a range of reasons identified in the Phase A results. They adapted newsletters that included photographs of the children and samples of their work. When possible, notices were translated into Samoan language. Informal activities that had a social element or included student performances or presentations resulted in improved attendance by other family members. As a result, the teachers planned an end of year Christmas celebration to encourage parents to visit the school. Parental involvement remained an area for continued effort at the whole school level.

The Year 1 teacher identified this as area for improvement:

And then we're also talking about....we're having a lot of trouble getting parents to come to things like parent-teacher interviews, or information times at the beginning of the year. For our Year 1, no parents came to our information afternoon. (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 19 October 2007).

She observed that they had more success with social events, where parents would come to watch their children:

We've talked about getting parents involved more. Like in our planning meetings we've been talking about different ways to get the parents to come ... We organised a good ... like an obstacle-athon. That was interesting. But that brought out lots of parents and so we didn't ask for them to help. It was more for them to watch and they enjoyed that. Like it was a sporting event. (Audiotaped interview, Year 1 teacher, 12 December 2007).

Non-alignment was evident in the expectations that teachers and parents shared as to parental roles and responsibilities in the school context. Forging links with parents remained an area for future work.

Teacher Reflections

Teachers were very supportive of the project and felt it had been worthwhile in rethinking the work they do in literacy teaching. Their evaluation of the project, as exemplified by the following comments, highlights what the teachers found as positive outcomes:

It was worthwhile... the link with other teachers and talking together, and thinking of more ways of helping the Samoan children.

The seminar data was very helpful; let other teachers [make the] link between the Church and home. This is important to know.

[With] the resources – having fresh things for the classroom – the kids were very excited.

The barrier games developing language skills and the word walls. They [students] were using it [word wall] and pulling them [words] off for their writing. I had flash cards and lists but this was more accessible to the children.

Having books that helped identifying themselves as readers.

The support with report writing.

Barrier games – they [students] loved playing them – using details and describing an aspect of fish. They were using complex sentences and more detailed language. When they finished early in the rotation activity, I used to use this as a reward.

Make and take Fridays – good response with the parents.

Researcher reflections

Throughout the project it was clear to the research team that generally the teachers were committed to addressing what they believed were areas of need although there was a continuum of willingness to change evident across the group. While all teachers specified areas to change in their own practice, their capacity to engage with critical reflection about new ways of teaching varied. For example, the level of response to professional readings and assessment data reflected individual teacher's beliefs about the value of these

sources of information. One teacher said at the beginning of the project. "Don't ask me to read anything", and, "I don't take any notice of those tests. I know what my children can do." Another teacher commented, "I'm not afraid to try new things. I know there are things I can do better". It was important for the research team to recognise the continuum for change that was evident across the group and seek future support for change at the school level.

Teachers found the resources helpful in practical work with students and having an opportunity to discuss their work with the group helpful in clarifying their understandings about their students' learning. Time limits remained a problem and the team was conscious of taking teachers away from their classes for meetings or using time after school. An area for future work that emerged in the research team's observations was the need for teachers generally to develop a more systematic approach to monitoring students' learning. We observed many interruptions throughout the school day as teachers often struggled to maintain the focus on teaching and getting through activities. This left insufficient time for them to check the students' completed work and/or to follow through on students' responses. These circumstances reflect the multi-tasking nature of teaching and the difficulties some teachers have in managing the broad range of work required of them on a daily basis.

Students

Year 1 students

The Sun Screener Speech and Language Screener for Year One Students is a normed assessment comprising various subtests that measure language, pragmatics and phonological awareness. It was compiled in 2003 by speech language pathologists working within Education Queensland. This instrument was administered to all Year 1 students at the end of Term 2, in June, and at the end of the year, in December. In June, we noted that the Samoan children generally had more difficulty with the application of narrative structures than the non-Samoan English-speaking children. The task measured children's logical sequencing of ideas and use of referential devices. Students were asked to use a series of cards to generate a story. Results for the test

performed in June 2007, and in December 2007, are provided in Figure 5. While they suggest improvement for the Samoan cohort across the six-month interim, six of the eight students continued to display either significant or mild difficulty with the task when post-tested.

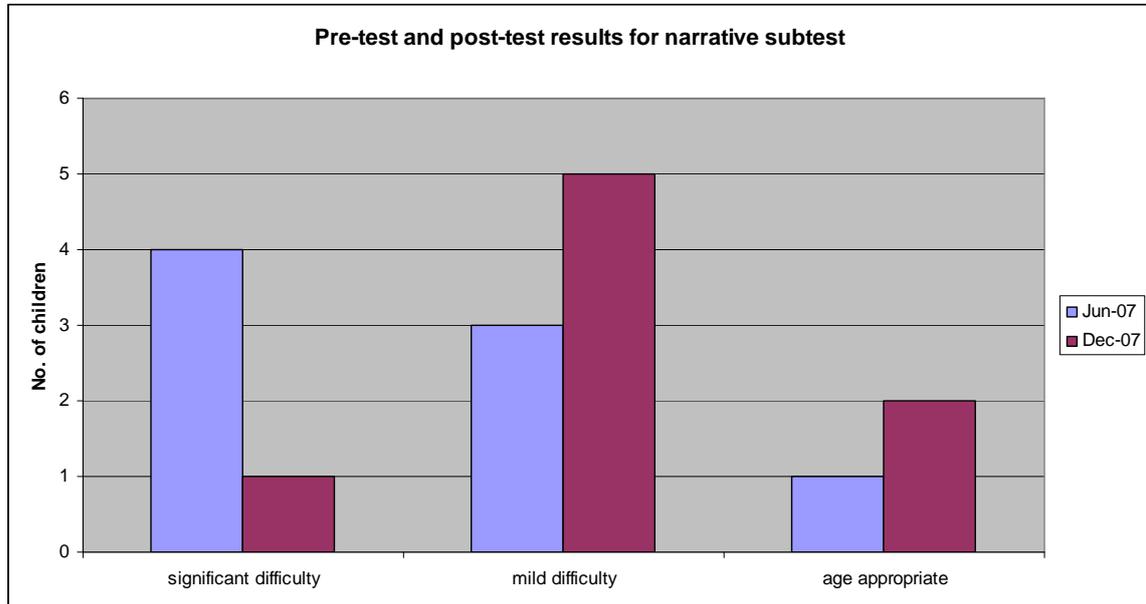


Figure 5. Pre-test and post test results for narrative subtest

We continued to monitor proficiency of students who experienced difficulty with narrative sequencing. Results for three of the students are provided in Table 5. These data were collected soon after the Sunscreeners post-testing. Our purpose was to compare the Samoan children's proficiency with the proficiency of a Year 1 student attending a government school in a middle-class suburb of Brisbane. Stimulus material used in the monitoring task is provided in Figure 6. Students were required to select and sequence cards in any order.

Table 5. Results of the Year 1 Samoan children and the control child on the narrative sequencing task

Samoan Child A	Samoan Child B	Samoan Child C	Control Child
(58 second delay) The school.	(2 second delay) He's going.	And then the bro' went outside	Once upon a time there was a boy named Jack who went to school and he was playing with his friends at school, but it had been raining the night before and he tripped over the school sign and he got all muddy
(4 second delay) Taking a bath.	(25 second delay) The boy is having a bath and then he's washing himself.	Then the bro' went to the bath	and when Jack came home he had to clean himself
(8 second delay) Get dressed.		And the boy just got up	and he put all his little bubbles and his rubber ducky and scrubbed himself in the bath
(11 second delay) In bed.	(2 second delay) And then he's going to sleep.	(22 second delay) The sister's making (2 secs) the sister's telling the boy to go to sleep.	And then his mother Sarah put him to bed with his bear Sam.

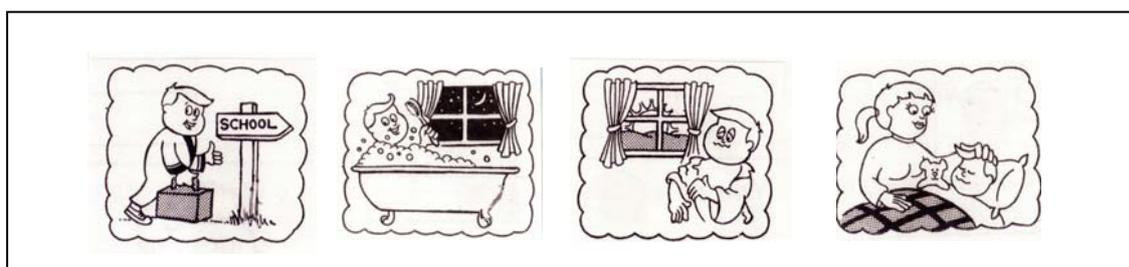


Figure 6. Stimulus pictures for narrative subtest

When pre-tested, Samoan children had difficulty with the SunScreener grammatical subtest. As shown in Figure 7, all but two of the children had made progress when post-tested. However, difficulties persisted with their formation of regular and irregular plurals. For example, when shown a picture of two toothbrushes, children replied “Two toothbrush”. When shown a pair of feet, they described them as “two foots”. Some students had difficulty using

possessive pronouns such as “hers” and “theirs” and possessive endings such as “the girl’s name”. Some had difficulty using irregular past tense, e.g. using “she drink” and “she drank” instead of the standard form “she drank”.

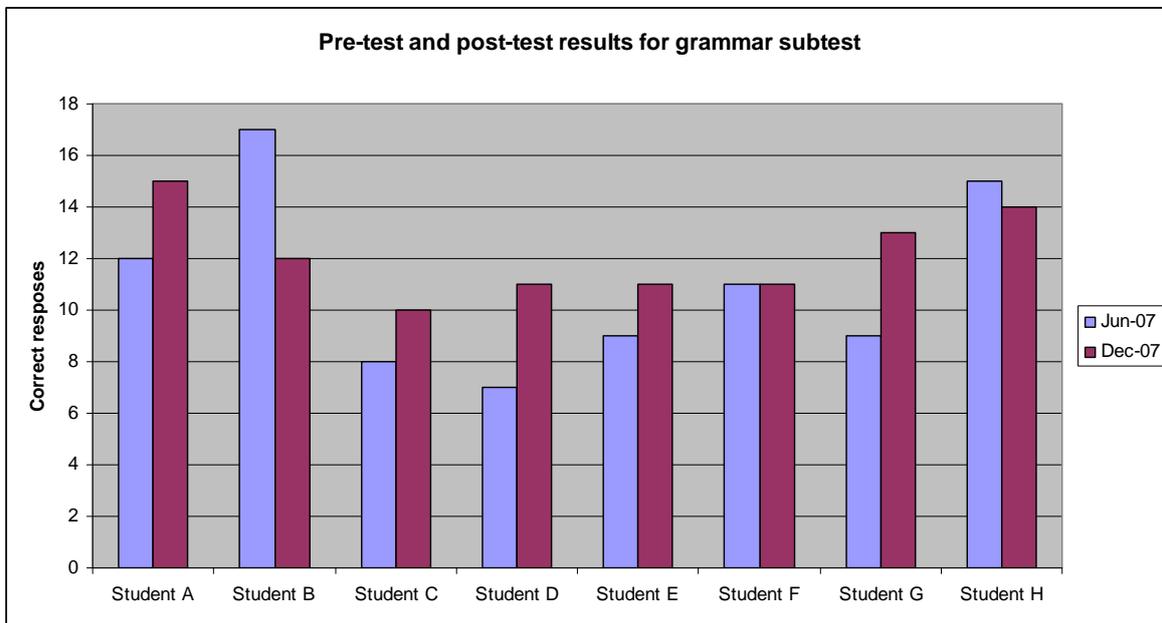


Figure 7 . Results for the Year 1 Samoan children on the grammar subtest

Year 3 and 4 students

Achievement data related to vocabulary and reading comprehension were monitored for one class of Year 3 students and two classes of Year 4 students.

The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary (3rd edition) were used for this purpose. In the Year 3 class there were four Samoan students. Our data for this group are incomplete because of student absenteeism. One of the students absent at the time of data collection was Noelani⁷ who, as one of the focus children in Phase A, had lost the opportunity to participate in a Reading Recovery program because of non-attendance.

Samoan students in Year 4 were over-represented in Stanines 1 to 3 for performance on tests of reading comprehension. Again, data collection was

⁷ Noelani was the only child from Phase A, in 2006, who was in the class of the Year 3 teacher participating in Phase B throughout 2007.

affected by four students absent in the post-test results. Three of these students achieved at the level of Stanine 1, while one student achieved at the level of Stanine 3. Data for Samoan students in Year 4 are provided in Figure 8.

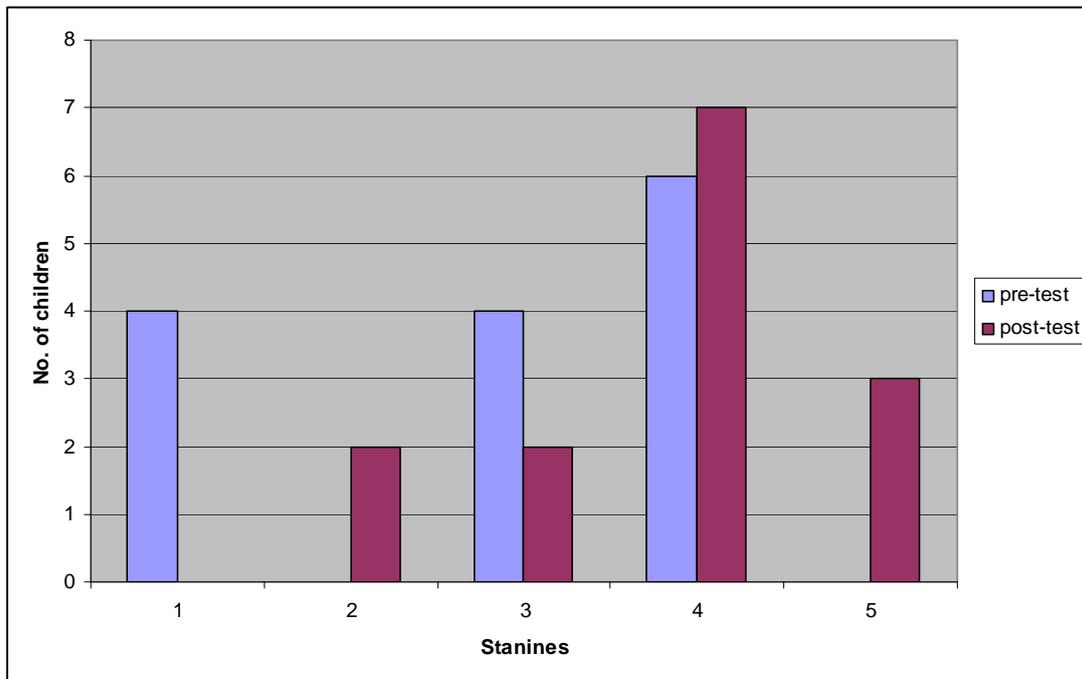


Figure 8. Comprehension results for Year 4 Samoan students

Samoan students in Year 4 were over-represented in lower-than-average stanines when tested on vocabulary (see Figure 9). Limited vocabulary knowledge was thought to associate with their reading-comprehension difficulties. Five students' results were affected by absenteeism.

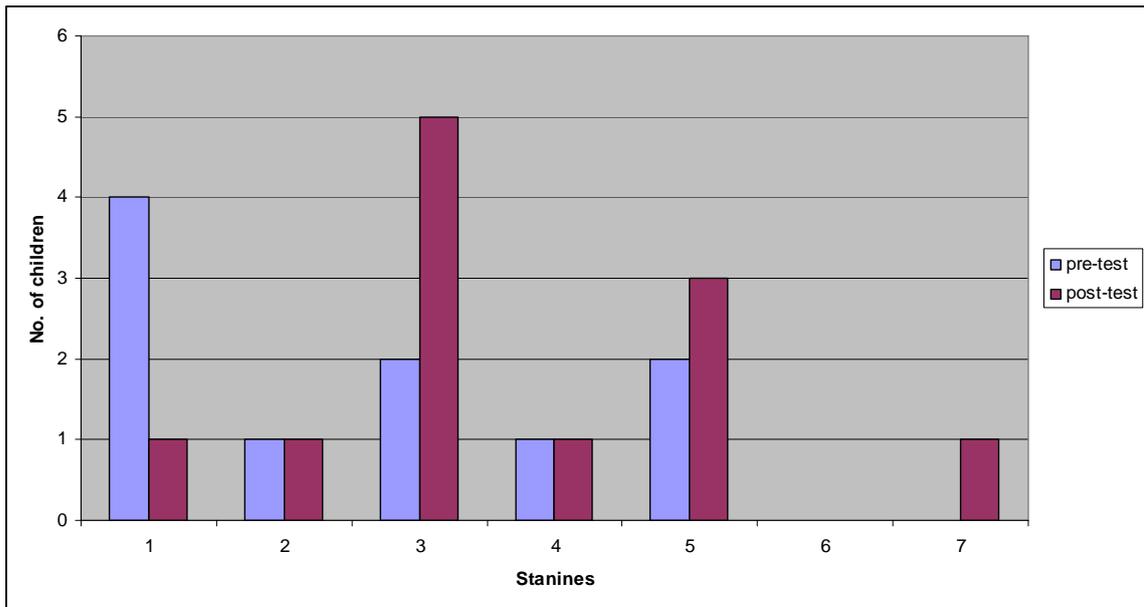


Figure 9. Vocabulary results for Year 4 Samoan students

Year 7 students

The Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary (3rd edition) was used to monitor students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Results were calculated for six students. These results, provided in Figure 10, show improvement. A full set of results for students' vocabulary tests was available for just two students. With the exception of one student's post-test results, all scores at the time of pre-testing and post-testing were within the Stanine 1–3 grouping.

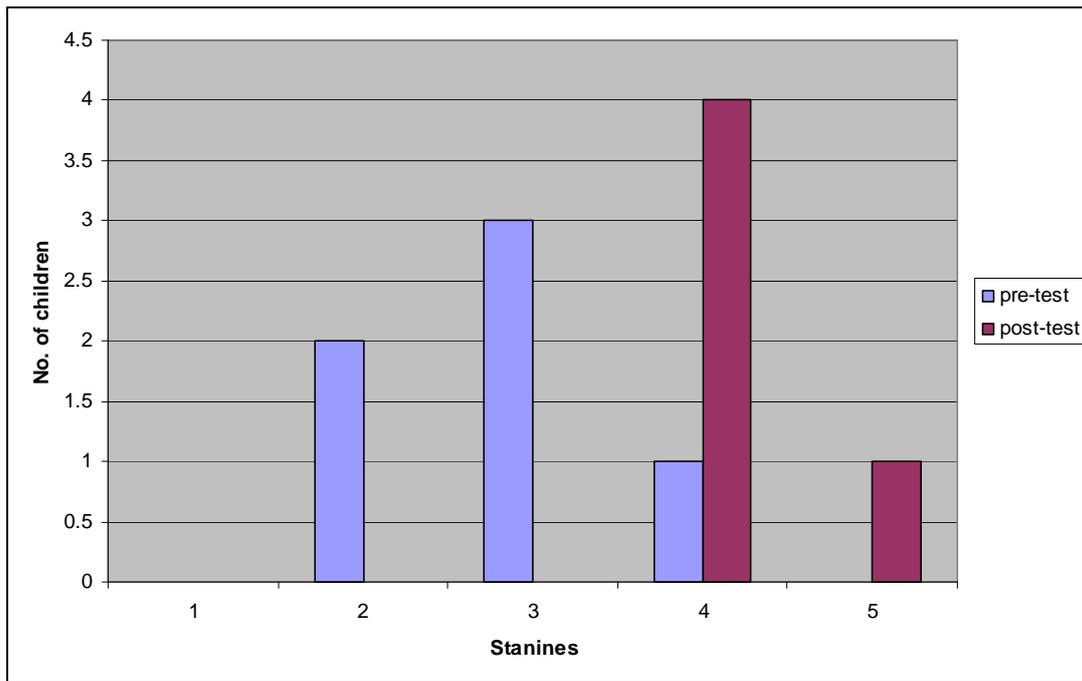


Figure 10. Comprehension results for Year 7 Samoan students

The Year 7 cohort, Samoans and non-Samoans, made considerable gains relative to the Year 7 cohort in the previous year on State tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. A comparison of the cohorts is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Percentage of students above the national benchmarks in 2006 and 2007

Aspect	Year 7, 2006	Year 7, 2007
R&V*	59%	65%
Writing	89%	94%
Spelling	Performed 15% above state mean on no items. Performed 15% below the state mean on 7 items.	Performed 15% above state mean on 3 items. Performed 15% below the state mean on 1 item.
Numeracy	50%	56%

*R&V: Reading and viewing

Regardless of the progress made by the Samoan Year 7 students between June 2007 and December 2007, their performance did not compare well with other year cohorts throughout the State and within their own school. The reading and viewing data provided in Figure 11 indicate that the mean

performance score of the six Samoan Year 7 students was below that of other all Year 7 cohorts. It suggests that the overall performance of the State LBOTE cohort masks the performance of ethnic subgroups such as the Samoan cohort.

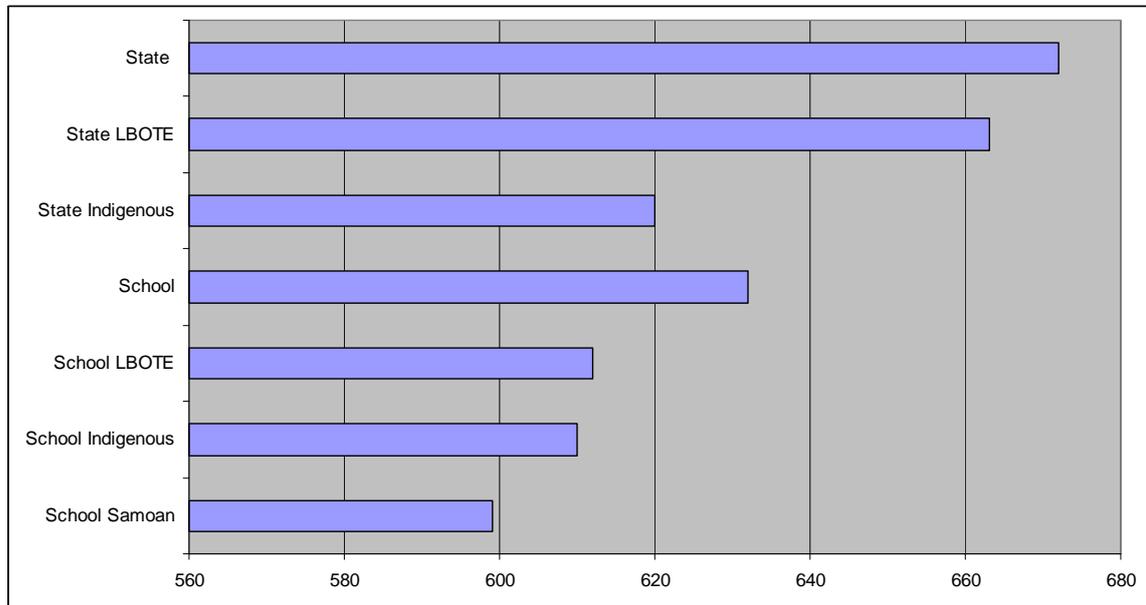


Figure 11. Year 7 mean reading and viewing performance scores across state and school cohorts

Whole school

Teachers were presented with findings from Phase A and test data during a pupil-free day and this became the basis for sharing understandings about the students they were teaching and identifying areas to be addressed as a result of the project (See Appendix 7).

Three key questions guided the presentation and framed teacher responses throughout the day. Whom do we teach? What do we teach? How do we teach? The following themes capture the main areas that emerged from the discussion.

Building cultural understandings

Teachers found the Phase A data informing and explanatory. They recognised their own students in the stories presented and could relate their own experiences working with Samoan students and their parents:

- The research lines up with what I see.
- Research findings are relevant across the board. Families lack confidence in their own educational skills.
- Research reflects issues that occur with Samoan students and their reading.
- Findings make sense but I feel a lot of children feel they shouldn't succeed because it's not cool. (Survey, August 2007).

Areas of need

The following list synthesises data collected throughout the day, with verbatim comments included to illustrate a specific focus identified by teachers in the surveys.

Reading

There was a general consensus on the need for a more explicit focus on reading with particular emphasis on comprehension, in preparation for the State tests. Some teachers identified a need for support in teaching students about the “genre of test taking”.

Comprehension

- Work at the inferential level: practice testing – demonstrate how to answer multiple choice questions; read books every day; teach to the test; make instruction and practice explicit, develop students' love of books through engagement; develop students' learning strategies.

Oral language

- Need to focus on oral language with emphasis on time to talk; develop experiences (prior knowledge); do retelling; develop students' vocabulary and, confidence in spoken language.

Parental involvement and cultural understandings

- Encourage parental involvement (homework/reading); improve communication with parents; skill-up parents.
- Do not rely on students for information:
- Recognise students say what they think teachers want to know. Develop intercultural sensitivities and inter-cultural communication.

Writing

- Focus on language structures/paragraphing, grammar, spelling; use Rigby Strategic spelling – link with word meaning.

Relationships

- Know the students; focus on intrinsic factors; understand students' personality factors such as risk taking, extroversion, etc.

Whole school policy

- Develop common understandings about what teachers teach including definitions and genres.
- Whole school focus on test taking and practice.

These results will inform future directions that the school may follow in building on the work commenced in this project.

Discussion

In this section we consider findings associated with Phases A and B in terms of their implications for parents and the community, students, teachers and schools, teacher educators and policy makers.

Implications for parents and their communities

Our findings show that parents of first-generation Samoan students rely on memories of their own island education and do not know enough about how school systems function and what is expected of them in Australia. In line with their own experiences of schooling, these parents see school and home as separate entities and do not see advocating improved learning opportunities for their children as part of their role. Many of these parents lack the English

language resources to do this. As churches play a significant role in the lives of Samoan families as sources of values, practical information and socio-cultural experience, churches are well positioned to support the work of schools in developing parents' understanding of how schools work and to what ends. Discussion between members of school and church communities, in familiar locations such as church sites, may provide a valuable forum to develop Samoan parents' understanding of:

- discipline procedures used in schools;
- the role of computers as a tool for learning;
- the importance of school attendance;
- the importance of developing Samoan language at home to facilitate development of English;
- the benefits of maintaining the cultural tradition of oral storytelling as a home practice.

Alternative community venues such as football and other sports groups that are popular among Samoan families, as well as scouts/guides and other groups where local parents of different family backgrounds are brought together with their children, may also be useful sites for stimulating these discussions and deepening mutual understanding among community members.

Implications for students

We have identified a cohort of Samoan students who, while bicultural, are not bilingual. In fact, these children are challenged linguistically in both Samoan and English. However, they are not eligible for ESL support because guidelines exclude them from ESL databases. We emphasize early intervention and believe that these students:

- will benefit from pre-school opportunities as three- and four-year-old children prior to schooling. These Samoan children need experiences to participate in teacher-led, play-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) activities that (a) promote the use of Samoan language as a means of

providing a vehicle for conceptual and cognitive support and (b) encourage familiarity with models of English language which form part of the cultural capital that children from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture bring to school;

- early intervention has the potential to precipitate alignment through the early phase of formal education. For example, opportunities for code-switching should be provided during the early phase of learning to scaffold Samoan children's' understanding of procedures and concepts. This will involve the appointment of bilingual teacher-assistants.

Implications for teachers and schools

There is a need for teachers and school communities to identify students' ethnic backgrounds and home languages. Procedures need to be implemented so that teachers have access to information about students and their families in order to answer the question: "Whom do we teach?" If teachers' understandings of whom they teach are misinformed or uninformed, the academic progress of many Samoan children will be compromised. As a means of promoting the literacy development of Samoan students and, in turn, their educational outcomes teachers should:

- have an expert understanding about the complex nature of teaching literacy in a diverse classroom;
- include opportunities for collaborative group work with explicit teacher talk to provide scaffolding for students' oral language development;
- use culturally relevant resources to promote intercultural understandings;
- set high expectations while modelling processes and products;
- provide visual support for verbal explanations;
- develop opportunities to promote world knowledge and associated vocabulary through experiential learning and stimulating curiosity;
- promote an interest in words and their meaning in a range of contexts;

- engage students in reading as a meaning-making activity;
- establish students' familiarity with the genre of testing.

Teachers' effectiveness relies on a supportive school community that:

- challenges deficit discourses that construct children and their families as "lacking". Such practices encourage blame rather than suggest effective responses and devalue the potentially positive contributions that Samoan families can make to the life of local schools, communities and nation;
- avoids group stereotyping of Samoans. Multiple and complex factors, including immigrant status, gender, age and Socio-economic Status (SES) shape the identity of all individuals;
- considers the introduction of Samoan as a Language Other Than English (LOTE);
- addresses absenteeism. This has been reported as a district concern for Logan City in local media (see *The Courier-Mail*, 3 April 2008). While it is noted that Samoans give top priority to family matters, they must be provided with understanding of how extended absence from school will negatively affect children's learning and disrupts teaching for all in the classroom;
- develops whole-school policies that contribute to a shared and integrated understanding of "Whom do we teach? What do we teach? How do we teach?";
- clearly identifies *non-alignment* between being Samoan and 'doing school' in order to identify ways of creating alignment – through well-informed decisions about effective practices that meet the needs of Samoan students; and,
- supports the ongoing professional development of teachers and develop a culture of professional learning, and consider action learning as one approach that will support teachers in making informed decisions about how best to teach Samoan students.

Implications for education training institutions

Teacher educators have a significant responsibility in preparing teachers to work effectively in diverse classrooms. They need to:

- provide a strong conceptual foundation across courses that will be the basis for teachers, upon graduation, to develop intercultural communication skills based on intercultural understandings;
- establish effective partnerships with schools that will provide pre-service students with a context to put into practice their theorised understandings about what constitutes effective teaching practices for underperforming students in the area of literacy; and,
- equip students with a capacity to think constructively about and research their own learning in the context of their school, classroom and broader life experience.

Implications for Education policymakers

National and State policymakers are urged to:

- review guidelines for ESL funding. These currently observe parameters such as time of arrival in Australia and country of origin rather than students' language proficiency and educational need;
- collect data system-wide about the educational factors affecting achievement of Samoan students. This will involve disaggregation of results for national literacy testing to identify levels of achievement for Samoan students;
- provide a collaborative, comprehensive response in terms of policy and strategic planning to improve educational outcomes for Samoan students;
- allocate additional resources to schools in low SES areas with high populations of Samoan students; and
- advocate for a whole-of-government approach so that education sectors are able to work collaboratively with other government

departments and community agencies to improve educational opportunities for Samoan students.

Limitations

The results reported in this project are contextualised within one school and limited to a small number of participants. The findings reported cannot be generalised. The study was conducted over 15 months and it was not possible to monitor long term effects or sustainability issues. As reported in the literature, it is very difficult to establish a relationship between teacher practice and student learning outcomes. In the context of this project, teachers did change their practices and generally reported improved outcomes for their students. Student data also indicate that generally students progressed in their learning. However, it is not possible to establish with certainty that this outcome was the result of the ALAR research process.

Further research

This project has identified a group of underperforming students whose results are masked in all State and National test results. In this report we have proposed ways of addressing this underperformance. Further research needs to be undertaken in different education contexts to replicate these results or to examine alternative approaches to improving student performance in literacy. This project used action research methods to support teachers in the change process. There are other approaches to professional development that need to be explored as potential methods to facilitate change. Tracking the effects of changed teacher practices on student learning needs to be monitored over time. In addition, the project raised other areas for research that include a need to better understand the following:

- development of teachers' intercultural sensitivity and expertise in literacy instruction;
- intergenerational difference;

- the role of family, church and school in supporting the alignment of 'being' Samoan and Australian; and,
- absenteeism, its causes and effects.

Dissemination

It is proposed that the results reported in the project will be disseminated in the following ways:

- whole school forum to continue conversations about progressing the work commenced in this project;
- an "aligning of worlds" presentation and discussion with representatives from Churches and schools and stakeholders to develop a plan of action that will address the *non-alignment* difficulties children encounter related to "being Samoan" and "doing school";
- a public presentation and forum to be held in the Logan City with invited community and schools;
- potential international journals to target for publication are:
 - Research in the Teaching of English
 - Language Learning
 - JLR Journal of Literacy Research
 - The Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies
 - The Journal of Language, Identity, and Education
 - TESOL Quarterly

Potential Conference for submission of paper presentation for review is:

- Australian Literacy Educators' Association Conference, July 2009

Conclusion

The aim of this project was to further develop linkages across schools and communities to improve literacy outcomes and identify teaching strategies that will enable improved school performance of underachieving groups.

Together with our key informants and teacher and student participants, we have taken a first step in a journey towards achieving our aims.

We have a clearer understanding of the need for explicit and intensive language teaching to advance Samoan students' cultural knowledge about how to succeed in school and maximise other opportunities for learning. We have a clearer understanding of the difficulties our Samoan students encounter when entering formal schooling. They face expectations that often conflict with those found at home and have limited cultural capital to cope with this difference. Priorities are different, language is different and expectations are different. Teachers also face difficulties as they attempt to meet these students' needs and have limited understanding of problems and potential solutions, inappropriate resources and minimal support. Education institutions and governing bodies have largely ignored the needs of these teachers and students.

With valuable contributions from project participants, this project offers a way forward using ALAR approaches to further our learning about how best to support teachers in their work with Samoan students. In this way the project contributes to maximising Samoan students' literacy outcomes and thus their capacity to contribute fully to the wellbeing of all in their community and nation.

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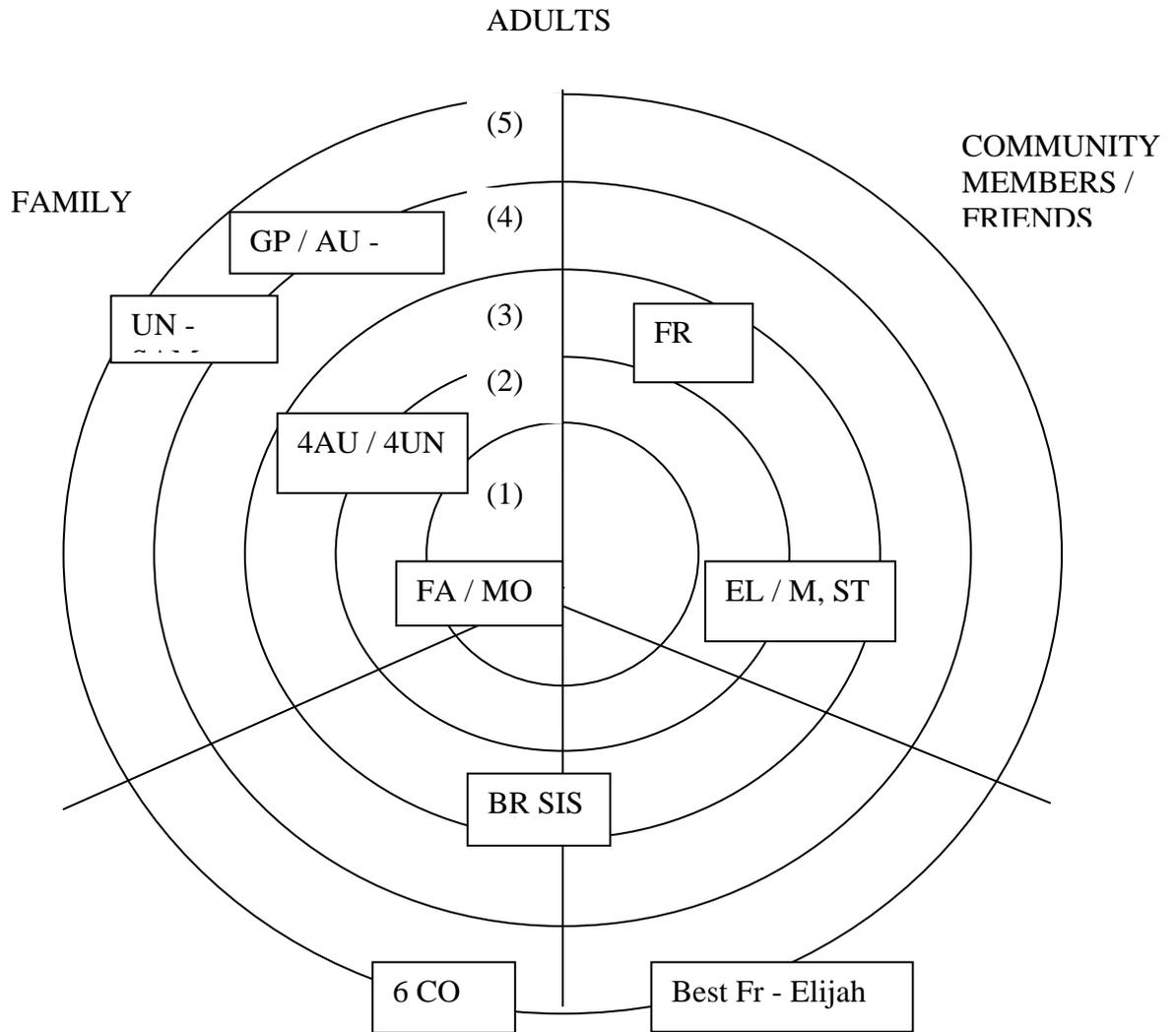
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Mapping device showing child's social context



CHILDREN

- (1) At home
- (2) People who are very close and you see often
- (3) People who you have contact with often
- (4) People who you see occasionally or casually
- (5) People who are important but you hardly ever

MO	Mother
FA	Father
BR	Brother
SIS	Sister
CO	Cousin
AU	Aunt
UN	Uncle
GP	Grandparent
FR	Friend
PR	Priest
M	Minister
ST	Sunday School Teacher
SAM	Lives in Samoa

Appendix 2: List of questions to guide children's photography

Please use this camera to take some photos of you and your family and friends. Here are some ideas to help you to decide what to photograph.

My favourite room

My favourite family time

My favourite game

My favourite food

My favourite book

My favourite friend

Someone in my family who is special

Someone in my family who thinks I am special

Someone in my family who helps me to learn

Someone in my family whom I help to learn

Something I do well

Something I am learning to do

Something I do before school

Something I do after school in the afternoon

Something I do at night

Something I do by myself on the weekend

Something I do with someone else on the weekend

Something I do with lots of other people on the weekend

Appendix 3: Summary of data collection

Date	Event	Data collected
12.10.06	Completion of network map with Afato's family	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Network map Field notes
19.10.06	Completion of network map with Sieli's family	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Network map Field notes
24.10.06	Completion of network map with Benton's family	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Network map Field notes
25.10.06	Completion of network map with Donald's family	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Network map Field notes
26.10.06	Conversation with Sieli's mother	Audiotaped conversation Videotape of Sieli's family at the church camp provided by Sieli's mother.
31.10.06	Conversation with Yr 2 teacher	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: photographs, work samples
31.10.06	Conversation with Afato's mother	Audiotaped conversation Videotapes of the Afato family at White Sunday and a family wedding provided by Afato's mother Field notes Artefact: hymn sheets
2.11.06	Conversation with Yr 2 teacher Classroom observations	Audiotaped conversation Field notes
4.11.06	Classroom observations Conversation with Yr 2 teacher	Field notes
13.11.06	Classroom observations Reading interviews with Sieli, Noelani and Afato	Field notes Audiotaped interviews
15.11.06	Classroom observations Reading interviews with Donald and Benton	Field notes Audiotaped interviews

16.11.06	Conversation with Afato's mother	Audiotaped conversation Field notes
20.11.06	Completion of network map with Noelani's family	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Network map Field notes
22.11.06	Multicultural Day at school	Field notes Artefacts: Photographs
23.11.06	Conversation with Afato, Sieli and Benton using photographic stimuli produced by each of the children	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Photographs
27.11.06	Conversation with Afato's mother using photographic stimulus produced by Afato	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Photographs
5.12.06	Conversation with Year 2 teacher Classroom observation	Audiotaped conversation Field notes Artefacts: Running records for Noelani, Sieli, Donald, Benton and Afato
7.12.06	Conversation with Year 2 teacher	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Term reports for Noelani, Sieli, Donald, Benton and Afato
7.12.06	Classroom events	Videotaped episodes: whole-class shared reading, small-group art activities, reading to the class Artefacts: Photographs
8.12.06	Conversations with Noelani's mother, Benton's older sister and Donald's mother using photographic stimuli produced by each of the children	Audiotaped conversation Artefacts: Photographs Videotaped episodes of 60th birthday party and family visit to Samoa provided by Benton's mother
11.12.06	Audit of Phase A data: Research team with Year 2 teacher	Artefacts: Photographic summary of outcomes
20.12.06	Conversation with Sieli's mother using photographic stimuli produced by Sieli Sieli's mother reading bilingual (Samoan-English) book with 3 of her children Benton reading an English children's book to young niece Afato playing cards with friend and two siblings	Audiotaped conversation Videotaped episodes
21.12.06	Conversation with Donald's mother	Audiotaped conversation

	about videotaped events, i.e. Donald's birthday party, play session at the park and visit with grandparents	Videotaped episodes
22.12.06	Conversation with Noelani about photographic stimulus which she had produced Conversation with Noelani's brother and sister	Videotaped conversations

Appendix 4: Examples – componential analysis using audiotapes of conversations / interviews, field notes and artefacts.

Set 1: What counts as being Samoan?

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Child's context	BBGBX Afato born in Australia. Older siblings born in NZ. Generation 1. Two older siblings live away from home but visit regularly.	GXBB Sieli born in Australia. Older sister born in NZ. Generation 1. Many relatives live locally.	BBGBXBB Benton is Australian-born. Older siblings born in Samoa and New Zealand. Generation 1. Three generations living at home.	X Donald is Australian-born. Generation 2	GGGBGGX Noelani is Australian-born. Older siblings born in Samoa and New Zealand. Generation 1. Many relatives live locally.
Child's social network	Samoan family and friends. Extended family in NZ and Samoa.	Samoan family and friends. Extended family in NZ and Samoa.	Samoan family and friends. Many relatives in Logan and Caboolture. Extended family in NZ and Samoa.	Samoan family and friends. Many cousins, aunts and uncles. Maternal grandparents live locally.	Samoan family and friends. Many relatives live locally. Extended family in New Zealand and Samoa.
Parents' context	Both parents born in Samoa. Father gained chiefly title in 2002. Father was a teacher in Samoa – now a bus driver. Mother works in factory at night.	Father working in as carpenter in factory. Both parents born in Samoa. "We are packing our container to take to Samoa" Audiotaped conversation 26.10.06	Father casual employment Mother learning English at TAFE. both parents born in Samoa.	Both parents working in retail. Both parents raised in New Zealand.	Father employment is unknown Mum performs home duties
Church attended	Uniting Church	Seventh Day Adventist	Seventh Day Adventist	Latter Day Saints	Seventh Day Adventist

Set 2: Language in the home.

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Home language: according to parents	<p>Samoan</p> <p>“Afato’s father is committed to teaching Samoan to his children and so Samoan is spoken all the time” (Field notes, 12.10.06)</p> <p>“Samoan culture is important. Samoan is spoken in our home” (Audiotaped interview, 31.10.06)</p>	<p>Samoan</p> <p>S’s mother: She understands Samoan but it is hard to read the Bible. It is too hard to understand. She finds it hard to have a conversation in Samoan.</p>	<p>Samoan</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>Samoan</p> <p>N’s mother: Our children are often told that they are not allowed to speak English in our home because when they go to school they always speak in English.</p> <p>I: Why do you want them to speak Samoan?</p> <p>Mother: So they don’t lose our language and understand our culture.</p>
Home language: according to child	<p>English</p> <p>I: Do Mum and Dad speak to you mainly in English or Samoan?</p> <p>A: English.</p>	<p>English</p> <p>I: Do Mum and Dad talk a lot in Samoan at home?</p> <p>S: Yeah.</p> <p>I: Do you understand?</p> <p>S: Yep.</p> <p>I: What kind of things do they say to you in Samoan?</p> <p>I: Turn off the TV.</p>	<p>Samoan</p> <p>I: Do you understand a lot when others speak Samoan?</p> <p>B: Yep</p> <p>I: Do you prefer to speak in Samoan or English?</p> <p>B: Samoan.</p> <p>I: What kind of things do your parents say to you in Samoan?</p> <p>B: Wash your hands.</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>Samoan.</p>
Home language: according to Yr 2 teacher	<p>English</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>English</p>

Set 3: Literacy practices in Samoan and English

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Samoan literacy	Int: Can you read in Samoan? A: Nuh Int: Can you write in Samoan? A:Nuh.	Int: Can you read in Samoan? S: ((shakes head)) Int: What about writing? S: Um, no.	Int: Can you read in Samoan? B: Yep. Int: And what about writing? B: Yep.	Int: Can you read or write in Samoan? D: Nuh. Can't do that. D: I can only sing in Samoan	Int: Can you read in Samoan? N: Nuh. Int: What about writing in Samoan? N: Samoan writes like English.
English literacy	PM 16 Sightwords 90 Writing and spelling at year level, reading below. Caught in Yr Diagnostic Net. No school intervention.	PM20 Sightwords103 Maintaining year-level standard – writing & reading but below year-level for spelling	PM23 Sightwords122 Writing and spelling well above year level. Reading comprehension above year level	PM24 Sightwords121 Maintaining year-level standard for writing & spelling. Reading fluency & comprehension.	PM8 Sightwords22 77/100 – Yr 1 words. Reading & some writing aspects. Caught in Yr 2 Diagnostic Net. Included in Reading Recovery but dropped because of absenteeism.
Comments about reading; Aloud v Silently	Int: Do you think you are a better reader when you read quietly inside your head or out loud? A: Quietly in your head. Int: Why do you think that? Cause no one can hear you.	I: Do you think you are a better reader when you read quietly inside your head or out loud? S: Quietly in your head. I: Why do you think that? S: You might get it wrong	Benton not asked this question about reading.	Int: Do you think you are a better reader when you read quietly inside your head or out loud? N: Quietly. Int: Why do you think that? D: So nobody can hear me.	Int: Do you think you are a better reader when you read quietly inside your head or out loud? N: Quietly. Int: Why? N: Because people can't hear me.

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Running record analysis	Uses visual information to predict words that usually are not usually semantically and syntactically appropriate. Limited use of self - correction.	Guesses words using visual information provided by consonants. Many errors not semantically or syntactically appropriate. No attempt to self-correct.	Does self correct when predictions do not make sense. When words are unfamiliar, syllables are sounded out.	Uses visual information to predict words that usually are sometimes semantically and syntactically appropriate. Uses a sounding out approach for unfamiliar words, e.g., a cent/tree line (for centre line). No self-correction.	Guesses words using visual information at the start of words. Many errors not semantically or syntactically appropriate. Self-correction rate = 1:12
Attendance at school	7 days absent, 2 late arrivals	1 day absent, 1 unexplained absence, 1 late arrival	1 day absent, 1 unexplained absence, 3 late arrivals	31 days absent, 12 unexplained absences, 34 late arrivals	61 days absent, 10 unexplained absences, 6 late arrivals
Computer use at home	Int: You don't use it [the computer]? A: No Int: Who does? A: My big sister.	S's mother: She plays games on the computer at her cousin's house. Int: Do you have a computer at home? S: No.	No computer – has X-Box.	Int: Do you have a computer at home? D: Yep. I play games.	Int: Do you have a computer at home? N: Yes Int: Do you use it? N: No Int: Who uses the computer? N: Older sisters and brothers cause the little kids might wreck it.

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Events evidenced in photos	<p>plays games on play station, plays cards & basketball</p> <p>watches TV</p> <p>helps with dishes, mows lawn</p> <p>attends church</p>	<p>Reads bible stories, helps with chores, watches TV and videos, cares for baby brother, attends church</p>	<p>Watches TV, especially cartoons, e.g. Bart Simpson, plays X-Box, favourite game is "50 Cent", draws and colours in, likes washing dishes, attends church</p>	<p>Plays games on computers, watches TV, eats out regularly with parents, aunts, uncles and cousins, plays with pet budgie, attends church</p>	<p>Drawing, plays in park, rides skateboard, watches cartoons, does chores (vacuuming and washing), attends church</p>
Parents' attitude to education		<p>S's mother: In Samoa, nearly every subject is in Samoan and English is taken as a subject. In Samoa students had to find answers to questions by using their brains and here students rely on computers for answers, and they use calculators. Their brains have gone lazy. Their brains are at rest.</p>			

Set 4: Photographs

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
My favourite room	bedroom	bedroom	Bedroom shared with brothers	bedroom	
My favourite family time				Eating out with mum, dad, cousins, aunties and uncles	
My favourite game	handball		50 cent /XBox	Blowing bubbles	
My favourite food	Biscuits and fruit	nutrigrain	Samoan food: white sa laisa (coconut rice), toast		biscuits
My favourite toy			helicopter		
My favourite book		My Bible Friends	Clifford's first Christmas	Dinosaurs	
My favourite friend	Samoan boy: Moses			Pet budgie	
Someone in my family who is special	Baby nephew	Baby brother	Mum	Mum and Dad	Large dog and bear (toys)

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Someone in my family who thinks I am special		My baby brother	Mum	Mum	
Someone in my family who helps me to learn				Dad	
Someone in my family who helps me to learn			Older sister		
Someone in my family whom I help to learn		My baby brother	Colouring in a picture		
Something I do well	Play cards		Drawing and writing	Play games on computer	
Something I am learning to do	Computer				

Categories	Afato (m)	Sieli (f)	Benton (m)	Donald (m)	Noelani (f)
Something I do after school in the afternoon	Homework Collect washing		Playing in park		
Something I do at night	Watch TV Wash dishes		Watch TV – cartoons – Bart Simpson		
Something I do by myself at the weekend	Play X-Box	Colouring in			
Something I do with someone else on the weekend	Pick vegetables from garden Mow lawn		computer	Help Mum in shop	
Something I do with lots of people on the weekend		church			

Appendix 5: Examples – analysis of videotaped events using Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Set 1. 60th Birthday party

Event: 60 th birthday party	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Dimensions of Contrast</div>			
Episode	Social purpose	Field	Tenor	Mode
MC's speech	Greets, thanks, outlines the program, leads hymn and prayer	<p>Experiential meanings: Reoccurring elements: I, we, she, as in "I would like to call on the bishop', We welcome...We will start, we give thanks to our Father in Heaven, We are especially grateful... I remember...</p> <p>Processes: need, welcome, call on, to be seated, celebrate, give, remember, know, has, going to give, was born</p>	<p>Talks on behalf of the family: "The Family feels honored" – The Family is seen as a homogeneous institution The MC organizes the seat allocation of the guests. He uses imperatives softened by politeness forms: "please move to the front table" or Please note: No eating and drinking permitted in the church hall. He tried to include the whole audience and expressed his hope that those who are not members of the Church will learn something from this celebration as well. There was an understanding of 'us' (the Mormons who are church members and 'them' – the other guests)</p>	<p>Text coherent with the discourse situation. Many themes point to the immediate context: 'This time...This. Topical themes are: I, we, she, they, today</p> <p>Interpersonal themes: thanks, may,</p> <p>Textual themes: who, on which.</p>

Episode	Social purpose	Field	Tenor	Mode
Bishop's speech	Reinforces the cultural role of mothers, thanks guests for their presence, welcomes a relative who came to the birthday celebration from Samoa and invites her as a special guest to the celebrity's table	<p>Experiential meanings; mainly relational processes used with identified identifier carrier, attribute or possessive relational structures: e.g. the mother is the heart of the family, sometimes she is worn out, she has many roles, she has her pure love for Jesus. Verbal process: thank Material processes: works, raises</p> <p>Mental: aware Participants: Actors: mother, she, the one, I, message, virtuous woman, children, the family, Goal: the children, the family</p>	<p>Interpersonal: The Bishop is aware of his power position. His statements are non-negotiable which is reflected through his verb choices. He uses a ceremonial style which fits well with the Bible quotes that he reads in order to underpin his statements e.g.: "Be aware that a mother is the heart of the family. If it hadn't been for the mother, it wouldn't have been any of us. He is clearly 'the teacher' who teaches his learners. He talks about how important it is to respect age. He blesses the birthday girl and talks to the daughters and granddaughters recommending that they should grow up and be good mothers and look after their children. He finished his speech asking young mothers to look well after their old mothers. Mood choices: Mainly declarative, occasionally interpersonal as in 'Be aware'.</p>	<p>Oral language. Well interconnected with cohesive devices – such as 'if, and', and pronouns that are in co-referential with 'mother'.</p> <p>He uses parallelism in order to enhance the effects of his speech manifested in subject finite complement structures: e.g. she works hard to raise the children, she keeps together the family, she has many roles etc.</p>

Episode	Social purpose	Field	Tenor	Mode
Sharing of food Accepting the gifts	Food is blessed			
Cutting of cake Grandmother and grandchildren do it together		Happy birthday sung in English by the 36 grandchildren		
Oldest son's speech	To entertain the audience and to talk about the family and the birthday girl	Introduces himself, talks about how this celebration was planned, describes his mother's life, makes jokes about his brothers and sisters	Simple clauses. Expresses appreciation for the celebration and sorrow that relatives from Samoa could not afford to join them except for one auntie. He talks on behalf of the Family which is reflected in the subject choices: "The Family is happy that Taiafi is back from prison" (he was not in prison, he just got married - this was a joke).	
Mother's speech	Thanking for the celebration and the gifts	All the clauses are built with the same pattern: I am thankful to God for my life, I am thankful to the children, the relatives, the guest.....	Simple clauses, all in declarative mood. The speaker is modest and humble.	

Episode	Social purpose	Field	Tenor	Mode
Dance 1	Granddaughters' dance for the grandmother. Body language and story telling by hands interpreted by a Samoan informant:	You held us tight you raised us with heart, You worked hard to make us beautiful Nothing in the world will take your place in our hearts. We will always remember you, no matter where we will go.		
Dance 2	Happy song danced by the grandchildren	Come let's go, have fun. You can do anything. You can dance even on the beach. Come, let's go. You can dance too.		
Dance 3	Oldest granddaughter's dance (14 years old)	I can dance I love my music Look at me how beautiful I am I love you grandma I am using my body to express my feeling for you I am enjoying it too I am dancing beautifully because you are watching me.		

Episode	Social purpose	Field	Tenor	Mode
Dance 4	CD – a Samoan patriotic song - sang by a female voice. All 36 grandchildren dance.	<p>This is a beautiful land</p> <p>A wonderful place to be together</p> <p>We thank God for everything we have</p> <p>You are a princess</p> <p>Dance, because you are beautiful</p> <p>You look wonderful when you dance like a Samoan girl</p> <p>You are so beautiful when you embrace your culture</p> <p>Whenever you dance.</p>		

Notes: Table covered with white cloth with rows of chairs. Sitting at main table – bishop, bishop's wife, guest of honour, the teacher, closest friends.

Themes that emerged were: social hierarchy, the role of family, lack of interaction with children, children conveying messages through body language, strong connection to the homeland, sharing food, joking. No code switching (as no direct communication with children). Children sang in English.

Set 2. Church Camp – Priest’s Speech

Nerang trip.

There are so many different kinds of plants. We went for a walk this morning and it reminded us of back home, for example we have the coconut tree which we know is a useful plant to our people and so we appreciate the fact that we have it as a blessing. We sometimes take it for granted that it is a blessing. The same issue is relevant here, this land is blessed with so many fruit trees and plants that we are not familiar with, and yet they are useful to others. Please do not underestimate how useful these plants may be to someone else. We need to protect and have respect for this campsite as it is so beautifully covered with so much that we need to be thankful for. To be able to come here and enjoy ourselves in a relaxed atmosphere in this wonderful area, as well as being united is to me a blessing in itself. We are surrounded by mountains and waterfalls, it’s just beautiful. We should be grateful that God has provided this for his children and in particular for us. While our being together is important, we can sometimes get carried away that we forget to realise that God has made it possible for us to be here and enjoy part of his creations.

There	were	so	many	different kinds of plants
	Rel. Exist	Circumstance	Comple	Existent
Subject	Finite	Predic.	Adjunct	
Mood Declarative	Residue			
	Rheme			

We went for a walk this morning

Actor	Mat.process		Goal	Circumstance
Subj.	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood Declarat.		Residue		
Theme	Rheme			
Topical				

and it reminded us of back home

	Senser	Mental pr.	Goal	phenomenon	
	Subject	Fin.	Pred.	Compl.	Complement
Mood Declarative		Residue			
Theme textual	topical	Rheme			

Experiential analysis

Processes: many relational – e.g. existential, identifying and attributive processes are in this text, because the priest describes the surrounding, makes statements such as: it is a blessing, it is a useful plant, the issue is relevant here, this land is blessed, it is important etc. Apart relational there are mental and material processes represented in the text. The mentals are: remember, appreciate, respect, get carried away, forget, realise, underestimate, whereas the material processes are expressed mainly via motion verbs such as went, walk, take, come, make, provides etc.

Accordingly, the participants are either actors, or sensors or carriers, identifieds, or goals, beneficiaries and range.

Interpersonal meanings: The priest is the power holder who expresses his feelings to the listeners which is the appreciation of the camp area. He uses throughout the text declarative mood and provides a whole range of descriptions. Towards the end of the text he uses two modals which are should and can:

We should be grateful that god has provided this for his children and in particular for us.

Here through the inclusive 'we' the priest demonstrates his closeness and membership in the group but through the act of recommendation he puts himself in a supraordinated position in relation to the other members of the group.

We can sometimes get carried away that we forget to realise that God has made it possible for us to be here.... (he reprimands his listeners that they forget God's greatness and they need to be grateful for being part of his creation.)

The priest's position comes clearly through via the evaluative expressions such as 'important, relevant, wonderful' etc.:

The same issue is relevant here

While our being together is important...

To be able to come here and enjoy ourselves in a relaxed atmosphere in this wonderful area...

Textual meanings: Topical themes mainly – reoccurring 'we' as the topical theme besides elements such as 'the same issue', 'this land', 'while our being together' and 'to be able to come here'. There is one interpersonal theme 'Please do not underestimate...' The text is coherent, it is characterized by a range of parallel structures that give the text a good flow.

Appendix 7: Whole-school presentation

Gylnrod North State School 15 August, 2007

8.00: Overview of project
 8.30: School snapshot - making sense of the data
 - *what does this mean for our school, me and my students?*
 10.00 Break
 10.30 Workshop- Who? What? Why?
 12.00 Lunch

The Project: Griffith's partnership with Glynrod North State School

1. Literacy focus
2. Pacific Islander students
3. Multicultural school – Logan City

- Objectives:**
- To implement stronger and better defined links between schools and the community they serve to improve literacy outcomes
 - To identify teaching/other support strategies which will best enable the performance of currently underachieving groups as identified by the National Benchmarks in Years 3, 5 and 7

Emerging Findings

Differences between 1st & 2nd generation families: (a) use of language (b) views of learning (c) expectation of children

Commonalities across families: (a) church (b) collectivist orientation (c) vertical orientation.

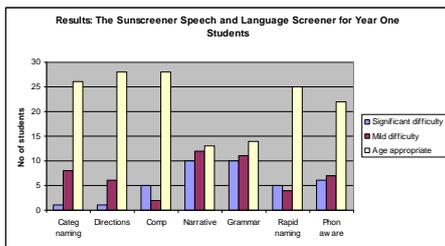
4 x Gen 1 families' use of language: (a) 4 children understand Samoan but 2 speak it confidently (b) parents' use of Samoan - regulatory function (c) 1 child with Samoan print literacy

Home resources: (a) print (b) TV & videos (c) computers

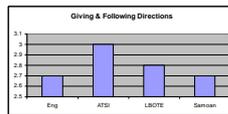
Flow of information: Home ↔ School

Project Findings	How does this relate to your students?
Who do we teach?	What do we teach?

Year 1 – Sun Screener results

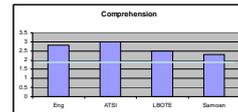


Year 1 – Sun Screener results



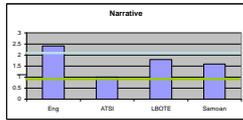
Giving: Tell me where to put the rabbit.

Following: Now, let me check. Which animal goes in the little red cage on the bottom shelf.



What noise does this animal make? Look at the cat and bird – how are they different?

Year 1 – Sun Screener results

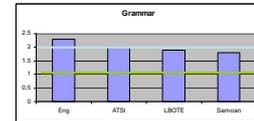


- A**
1. He goes outside.
 2. He has a red thing.
 3. He is having a shower.
 4. He is on the table.
- B**
1. He stinked.
 2. He was too dirty.
 3. He got washed.
 4. The dog ran away. He got dirty.

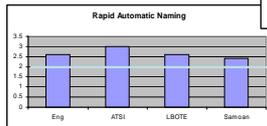
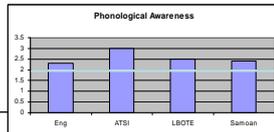
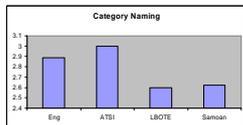
1. "Poo, you smell Roly" said Kate, holding her nose. "I'm going to give you a bath".
 2. She put lots of water and soap in the tub and washed Roly all over. Roly liked having a bath.
 3. When Roly was all clean, Kate dried his fur with a big towel. He smelled much better now!
 4. Then Roly ran away and Kate found him rolling the grass. He was dirty again! Oh no, what a naughty dog!" she cried.

Year 1 – Sun Screener results

Regular & irregular plurals [1 book> 3 books; 1 tooth>2 teeth]
 Possessive pronouns [He has a bike. Whose bike is it? It is]
 Possessive 's ending [The book belongs to Dean. Whose book is it? It is]
 Objective pronouns [She is chasing him and he is chasing ...]
 Auxiliary + x-ing [The boy is]
 Articles [use of "a" and "the"]
 Regular past tense [The boy got a ball and he]
 Irregular past tense [What did the girl do? She dr....]



Year 1 – Sun Screener results



Yr 1 Findings	
How does this relate to your students?	What should we teach?

Year 3 & 4 Vocabulary: What's happening here?

<p>5. We have a <u>difficult</u> book to read.</p> <p>long 18 %</p> <p>different 35 % 25 %</p> <p>easy 35 % 4 %</p> <p>hard 6 % 63 %</p> <p>important 0 % 3 %</p> <p>No attempt 6 %</p>		<p>8. The child's face looked quite <u>pale</u>.</p> <p>angry 24 % 21 %</p> <p>bright 11 % 4 %</p> <p>white 11 % 4 %</p> <p>surprised 18 % 1 %</p> <p>pleased 18 % 11 %</p> <p>no attempt 18 %</p> <p>6 %</p>	
<p>4. The aeroplane flew <u>above</u> the school.</p> <p>around 35 % 11 %</p> <p>away from 18 % 4 %</p> <p>near 6 % 6 %</p> <p>over 29 % 73 %</p> <p>6 6</p>		<p>22. Most people liked the <u>design</u> of the house.</p> <p>front 17 % 3 %</p> <p>plan 37 % 35 %</p> <p>colour 17 % 40 %</p> <p>inside 17 % 10 %</p> <p>view 0 % 13 %</p> <p>14</p>	

Yr 3 & 4 Findings	
How does this relate to your students?	What should we teach?

Yr 3 & 4 Findings	
How does this relate to your students?	What should we teach?

1. Why did Mrs Black want to sell her house?

Literal

	Yr 3 (N=16)	Yr 4A (N=26)	Yr 4B (N=22)
A. There was no garden.	12.5%	7.5%	4.5%
B. It was cold and dark.	37.5%	0%	0%
C. There were no cupboards.	12.5%	4.5%	4.5%
D. She had lived in the same house for a long time. One day she said that she had never wanted to see a man who sold houses.	37.5%	88%	81%

4. We can tell from this story that the man

Inferential - Paragraph

	Yr 3 (N=16)	Yr 4A (N=26)	Yr 4B (N=22)
A. Became angry.	25%	4%	0%
B. Talked too much.	19%	0%	9.5%
C. Did not like old ladies.	6%	15%	4.5%
D. Wanted her to be happy.	50%	81%	86%

The man said, "Never mind, I think I can show you another house that has everything you want." They drove off again and stopped outside another house. It was her own home.

18. You add parsley so that food will

Inferential - Vocabulary

	Yr 3 (N=16)	Yr 4A (N=26)	Yr 4B (N=22)
A. Look nice.	50.5%	35%	36%
B. Taste good.	37.5%	38%	45%
C. Feed more people.	6%	4%	-
D. Be better for a vegetarian.	6%	7%	18%

Step 7 **Decorate** the dish with a sprig of parsley.

21. When Marion said "You'd have been late" she meant "if you

Inferential - Literal + Literal

	Year
A. Were as tired as I am."	33%
B. Were driving that Land-Rover."	21%
C. Had been with Topsy and Gladys."	33%
D. Had been doing what I have been doing."	9%

No attempt (4%)

"You'd have been late," she laughed.

Since leaving Alice Springs, she'd driven 300 miles; treated a boy for scorpion bite; dosed a baby for dysentery; drawn an elder's abscessed tooth; sewn up a woman who'd been hurt in a fall; and splinted a sprained ankle.

Yr 3 & 4 Findings	
How does this relate to your students?	What should we teach?

22. Marion probably worked as

Inferential – Paragraph

	Year
A. A nurse.	43%
B. An artist.	7%
C. A driver.	25%
D. A dressmaker.	25%

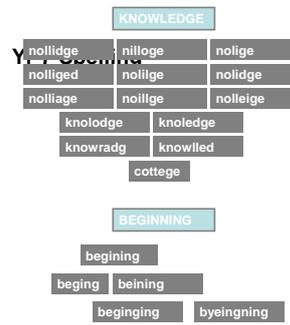
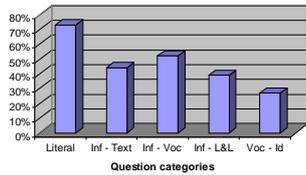
Since leaving Alice Springs, she'd driven 300 miles; treated a boy for scorpion bite; dosed a baby for dysentery; drawn an elder's abscessed tooth; sewn up a woman who'd been hurt in a fall; and splinted a sprained ankle.

"Against All Odds". This title tells us

Vocabulary – Idioms

	Year 7
A. Painted with an unusual style.	27%
B. Succeeded in spite of great difficulties.	27%
C. Gave up her dream to become an artist.	5%
D. Had an odd life with many different jobs.	41%

Yr 7 Comprehension results: Question categories



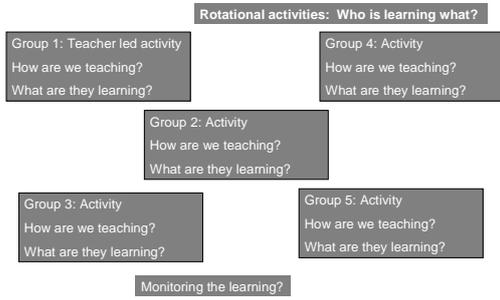
Yr 7 Findings	
How does this relate to your students?	What should we teach?

Who do we teach?

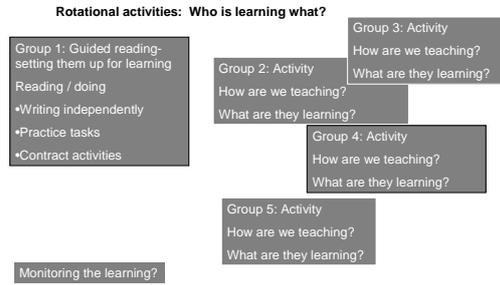
What should we teach?

How do we teach?

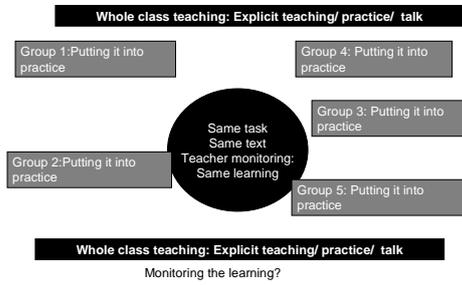
Maximising our teaching == time on task



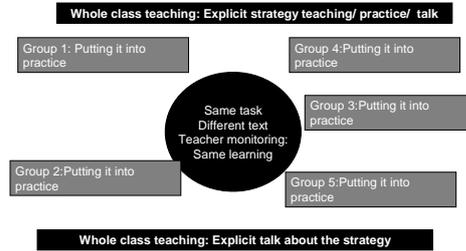
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