

Appendices

Pasifika teachers in secondary education: Issues, possibilities and strategies

Tony Brown, Nesta Devine, Elsie Leslie, Margaret Paiti, Emilie Sila'ila'i, Sandra Umaki, and Jay Williams

Appendix A: Case study of Lefu: The process of a new Pasifika teacher seeking employment

In trying to capture one example of a teacher making the transition into teaching, we provide a case study of Lefu.

We are able to track the teacher from the beginning of our project when the teacher was recently qualified and still in the process of looking for jobs. We begin with some reflections by her when she had started to apply for jobs and dealing with the disappointment of not getting shortlisted. We review some reflections made during the subsequent period while she was doing part-time relieving. These reflections capture the insecurity of trying to fit into schools. A particular incident provoked some anxiety and we provide an account of how the teacher tried to make sense of this. We then offer some reflections provided by the teacher when she finally achieved the security of a permanent position. These reflections are supplemented by comments from her new principal on her process of settling and how this process compared with that of other new staff members. The comments also compared her position in school with that of a Pasifika teacher already in the school.

Reflecting on interviews

Recently qualified Lefu is in the process of applying for jobs in a competitive market. She reflects on how she is crafting her CV to be noticed.

I've done so many CV's it's not funny, different types of paper, so it stands out. I spent a lot of money on my CV and presentation of my CV, actually, I've changed it several times, now I've changed it so it tells the story of me. So I've got the title, my Graduate Diploma of Teaching, then under it just a brief paragraph of why I made the decision to become a teacher and how I found doing the course. Then it's got my Bachelor's and it's got a brief paragraph of how I found doing my Bachelor's. And then there's just a list of my work history. I kept it brief, because I know the last thing a principal wants to look at is a long-winded CV, and just a cover letter. I've spent lots of money on different types of paper, but I've decided yellow marble paper is the best one.

On occasions she finds herself competing with more than a dozen other candidates:

I got fed up once because I got so many rejection letters, and I called up (the school). I said, 'Look, I've applied for two jobs, it took you so long to get back to me, how come I wasn't short-listed for interviews?' and they said, 'Actually, you got in the top ten, but we only interviewed the first five.' She just said they short-listed and they short-listed me for the top

ten, but they only interview the first five of the ten, which I couldn't understand, why would you short-list ten then, if you were only going to interview five. I told her that I felt that you could have given me a chance and you chose not to just cos you only do five. They said it was a time-frame thing and they were in a hurry to fill the gap.

Well the job that I was going for was Social Studies/English, so it was perfect really, but what bugs me is when I hear from the kids what they really think of that teacher that took the role and then I hear that teacher's left the school cos she couldn't handle it. I didn't reapply or anything like that, but . . . it's frustrating though, you just get down in the dumps, with rejection letter after rejection letter. My philosophy is that it wasn't meant to be, it's timing, it wasn't for me at that time, whereas applying for jobs now feels right, the timings right. I haven't heard from any yet, it takes two or three weeks, if I don't hear by the third week I'm going to ring. I haven't heard back from any yet, but I sent a letter to (one school) expressing interest in an English job they had, and they wrote back and said that applications were closed, but they were still interested in my application . . .

Reflections during early relief teaching

This section presents diary reflections kept by the teacher during her early days as a relief teacher.

4/3/2004 First day relieving at school. Initially a little nervous; however, I managed to make it through today. At first a few of the students in various classes were rather boisterous. I was often asked where I was from. I answered each time with the following response: "I'm from Auckland and I'm Samoan." Students were stunned to have a Samoan teacher I'm not too sure if it's a welcomed change or not for the students.

STAFF ROOM

I feel like a nobody at the moment I found myself shifting towards the table where all the Māori teacher are seated but I still feel out of place. One of the Cook Island teachers is very hospitable which is good but it's rather difficult trying to fit in. Hopefully it's only first day nerves.

5/3/2004 My second day already. Had an accelerate class Year 11 today doing Year 12 work. Talk about a cocky group of boys. I came across one student struggling with the short story they were reading I tried to offer assistance and the boy turned to me and said "Miss, you don't know what we're talking about because you have to have the story to know what you're talking about." What a dick head!!!! I walked away and left him to suffer with his own incoherent thoughts about the short story. I had the impression that this particular student saw brown reliever, she don't know what she's doing. JERK. Anyway, I digress. I went back to the student towards the end of class and basically spoke to him with words filled with so many syllables he couldn't keep up. I think I got my point across though. The student asked me if I taught English and I said yes; he humbly returned to doing his work.

STAFF ROOM

Talk about dreading to go and eat my morning tea. I half-heartedly returned back to the staff room to have morning tea. BIG MISTAKE I sat next to a group of middle aged group of people they didn't say BOO not even a simple hello or simple Hello smile. Is it me? Or do they not have skills in being friendly towards other. Lunch was again another highlight of my day!! I sat next to a teacher on her own who managed to give me some friendly conversation however, when her mates turned up she did not introduce me or try to include me in the group. Talk about feeling so isolated. I just got up and left and joined the Māori teachers at the table in the middle of the staffroom.

15/3/2004

A student asked me today if I was Pacific Islander. I responded by telling him, no I'm Samoan. He then went on to ask me what part of South Auckland I was from. I've often had this question from students, they just seem to assume I'm a Pacific Islander, therefore, I am from South Auckland and apparently because I'm from West Auckland I may not be considered a true Pacific Islander because I'm from the west, apparently I'm of a higher class just because of where I have raised. In another class they were surprised when I mentioned that I was Samoan and they were even more surprised by the fact that I can speak the language.

STAFF ROOM

Here I am again hanging out with the Māori teachers having a good laugh sharing our lunch and I guess I'm just comfortable with them and their humour. They embrace me, and acknowledge me and they are more genuine when they ask me how am I doing? They are actually interested in what I have to say. They are quite a nice group of people Aunty Pani is hard case!

16/3/2004

Today we had an interesting English class. I could see the students are getting frustrated with the amount time their teacher had been away for. The teacher has a very ill son which I explained to the students and they appeared to be sympathetic to their teacher; however, one boy said that the teacher's son being sick will not help him in passing his assessment. I told the student that having a teacher teaching him half heartedly because she is concerned about a sick son at home could be worse than her absence today. He thought about it for a while and nodded his head in realisation when he finally switched on to what I was saying. I had a small class of boys who were the academy boys, they were not quite the intelligent lot, well not in English anyway. One egg decided he would draw a dog on his back with a whiteboard marker. I took him aside and spoke to him and discovered he was Tokelauan.

STAFF ROOM

HHHHhhhhmmmmmmmmmmnnnnnnnnnn Back at the same table with the same folks. I sat with some other group at lunchtime because my normal table of mates were not there at lunchtime, the work load must be kicking in now. So I sat with a group of younger looking staff members; they were all male however, once again conversations were pretty much non-existent I should of just stayed in my class to eat. Talk about a mundane lunch.

30/7/2004

Another stressful day I found myself relieving all the lower classes. 10I class came into class rather stropy They thought I would tolerate their stropiness and walked into the class praising the fact they have a reliever. As I watched them come into class I gathered the energy I needed to attain control. After 10mins into class I couldn't handle their disrespectful behaviour and ripped into them. After our brief conversation the room was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. It takes a lot of energy to attain control and I can see it being quite draining for some.

STAFF ROOM

I didn't feel like going to the staff room since they are so friendly (not). Anyway lunch was quite nice from a local bakery.

13/8/2004 Once again I have the Māori academy boys. They are a good bunch of boys they just have different perspectives on life I guess. I could see how some of the boys may be a result of the environment they have grown up in however, there are the odd one or two who appear to want to make changes in their lives but they appear to have hit a brick wall.

STAFF ROOM

I've managed to get along well with the members of staff who are Māori. They are a lot more friendly than the other staff. I tried sitting somewhere different, throughout all of morning tea nothing was said to me not even a hello. I purposely decided not to say hello first I did that last time I sat with this particular group. They were all Pakeha, one teacher teaches Chinese, and one taught science and the other two teachers taught English. I gathered all this information from relieving these ladies' classes. Every time I relieve, I leave relief notes for the teachers; however, there was not mention of my notes or even a simple hello. SNOBS!!! It's no wonder I go wandering for lunch and morning tea rather than hanging out in their mundane staffroom.

23/8/2004 Not too bad today. I had science classes but the most interesting thing happened today. I walked into my class after morning tea and two science teachers were discussing how I had been yelling at my previous class. One of the cocky wannabe teachers asked me "Are you ok with your classes?" I could read the undertones in his question. I knew he thought I had no control over that class. However, ironically that same day I had to walk through his class to get to mine. One student yelled at that same teacher saying "Sir you're a useless teacher man." I turned around and growled at the student for disrespecting his teacher in that manner. The teacher did not say a thing. However, I was not impressed at how he judged me as a not too great at relieving.

STAFF ROOM

Same old same old, hung out with the Māori teachers and shared our lunch I thought it was pretty cool. Another teacher brought a pot full of cooked mussels the other day. It was divine. I'm enjoying hanging out with the Māori teachers; however, I have noticed on occasion I can not connect with them in various conversations because a lot of the talk is about extracurricular areas that I have no affiliation with.

Pacific
Island
Group I have been roped in by one of the teachers to teach the students in the Pacific Island group so I will be teaching the Hawaiian and Samoan section; hopefully it all works out.

Talk about extremely busy; we have practises every Wednesday; however, the students are interesting. The Samoan students are not supporting the other culture. The groups are to perform 5 different dance routines from 5 different islands of the Pacific. We have just found out that our Hawaiian dance will not be classified as a Pacific Island. Due to the fact that they can't find a judge with true knowledge of Hawaiian dancing. Unfortunately, one school pulled out their Niuean group for the same reason. The Pacific Island Trust couldn't find someone adequate to judge the Niuean section. I think this is disgusting, why are they knocking out the students desire to perform these two cultures due to admin type stuff. I'm shocked!!

24/8/2004 I will be at school for the rest of this week thanks to tournament week so I'm considering myself to be very lucky.

An incident while relieving

This section provides an account of an incident in which the teacher perceived staff to be acting in a difficult manner. It includes discussion of how the teacher made sense of this incident. It also includes later reflection when the teacher looks back on the incident from the security of a permanent job.

I just wanted to share an experience that I'd had when I was relieving at a primary school. I went to have lunch. The school didn't tell me that I was on duty for the teacher that I was relieving for . . . I walked into the staffroom and the deputy principal looked me straight in the eye and she goes, 'Do you know that you're supposed to be on duty?', in front of the whole staff. I was at one end of the room, she was at the other and I said, 'Oh well actually I wasn't told that I was actually meant to be on duty', and she goes, 'Well, do you realise that S's out there doing the duty, and you should be doing it?' . . . really demeaning. Well I felt that she was really demeaning. And I said, 'Okay, I'll go out straight away'.

When I finished the duty . . . I was going back to my classroom . . . and the team leader of the teacher that I was relieving for goes to me, 'Do you realise that you were supposed to be relieving at lunch time today?' She spoke to me . . . like she was talking to a five year old. She was lucky she was talking to someone else, because I was ready to rip, you know. I'd just been demeaned in front of other staff members (by the deputy) and then I walk in the hallway and (the team leader) talks down to me. And I walked into that classroom and I just thought, 'Who the heck does she think she is?' I was so angry! And then after that, because it bugged me for that whole afternoon, it just ruined my afternoon. I thought the school was beautiful until that time. And then after school, I walked into (the team leader's) room and I said, 'Did you talk down to me because of my colour? Do you think I'm dumb and stupid and that you have the right to talk to me in that manner?' I was just not impressed! And I said, 'Who do you think you are, Miss X?' because she's from X. I was so angry. I said, 'Don't you dare do that to me again!' and I said, 'I would have said these exact words if you were not talking to someone else in that corridor, but I respect you as a human being and I leave it until now' . . . Her face, she went all red. She doesn't say sorry, that's one thing I noticed. She goes, 'Well, you should have been there to do the duty' . . . I think she got her back up, because maybe she was surprised that I had this thing to say, and she said . . . she didn't even say sorry, she said, 'Well, you should have been there to do your duty', and I said to her that I didn't know, that Mrs T did not tell me that I was on duty, and if you had told me I would have been there . . . So she pretty much said, 'Oh well'. That was how our conversation ended . . . So I won't be relieving there for a while I don't think!

It brought back a lot of ill feelings, because I felt like I had to go through that when I was on section, you know, people mistreated me and I thought they just stereotyped me, 'brown girl, coconut, probably just scraped through' kind of attitude. And that's the impression I get every time people demean me like those ladies did. And I think they do it a lot, because I've had it often.

Extract from interview with a Samoan team member:

I: What was the actual response?

Lefu Which one? Miss X? I've got a mouth and when it has to work it will work. Her face, she went all red, she doesn't say sorry, that's one thing I noticed, she goes, 'Well, you should have been there to do the duty', she still, I think she got her back up, because maybe she was surprised that I had this thing to say, and she said ... she didn't even say sorry, she said, 'Well, you should have been there to do your duty', and I said to her that I didn't know, that Mrs James did not tell me that I was on duty, and if you had told me I would have been there.

I: There was nothing written on the teacher's desk to say that you were left to [...]

Lefu So she pretty much said, 'Oh well, that was how our conversation ended.

I: Good on you for speaking up.

Lefu So I won't be relieving there for a while I don't think!

How might one review these incidents and the subsequent report by the teacher herself? Clearly, analysis is not going to deliver a definitive account of the factuality of these encounters. We can only speculate why, on the one hand, some senior teachers spoke in an apparently abrupt and rude manner, yet the teacher interpreted this abruptness as racist. With the limited information available on this incident we can only attempt to fill in some of the detail of the story that has the teacher interpreting abrupt speech as evidence of a racism that affects her broadly across her life generally and specifically with regard to her entry in to teaching. Whatever the scope, intended or otherwise, of the senior teachers' comments, taken together with other experiences, the teacher interpreted the comments as fuelled by racism.

We offer some attempt to make sense of this incident.

Having been unsettled by the staff room incident, the teacher found herself exasperated by the subsequent encounter with the team leader. It is the teacher herself who introduces the suggestion that these encounters were a result of racism and confronts the team leader on this supposition, and further raises the cultural stakes by introducing reference to the team leader's nationality. The teacher was introducing the racial element within a particular version of self in which the racial tag was dominant in flavourings interpretations made. The teacher was new to teaching and felt insecure and attributed part of this insecurity to a perceived sense of not being fully accepted. It is hard to say whether the actions of the two teachers were racist or not, and this tag potentially gets in the way of careful analysis. The team leader or the deputy principal, would not think of themselves as being racist. Yet it would seem that the style of their actions as reported resulted from specific interpretations of the power relations that prevailed that opened the door to readings in which racism might be insinuated.

Yet can we find pathways that offer more positive outcomes, perhaps only for this specific teacher, but perhaps also for other teachers in this situation. There seems to be a need to explore alternative interpretations of the event, and consider how different parties would bring different

interpretations to it according to where they are positioned in relation to the exchanges described. Our conjecture was that Pasifika teachers clearly experienced additional pressures in the early days of teaching, and some of these would be the result of them being marked by others in ways that accentuated these pressures. If this included racism, racism was not going to be removed easily by new vulnerable teachers, yet by better understanding how such vulnerabilities arose such teachers might be better equipped to confront them or circumnavigate them so as to reduce the disturbance to their growing confidence as a teacher.

We are experimenting with research strategies to see what results could be produced. We cannot predict with certainty how the research practices or the research material we produced would affect educational practices. We can only work with models that might succeed. The research team had spelt out some broad objectives in the proposal yet the task of working with such specific and personal data forced reconceptualizations of how we imagined reports of our research outcomes might affect practices.

Some six months later we raised the issue with the teacher again to ask her to look back on the event through the transcript produced. We were specifically wondering if she still interpreted the event as a racial incident or whether, given her more recent establishment in a more secure job, she might revisit the event as being more about her own insecurity as a new teacher. Could the incident be recast as a less significant component in the story the teacher told of her emerging professionalism. The teacher responded and the relevant extracts are reproduced here:

May 2005

At the time of the incident I felt that they did not appreciate who I was. I felt like a five year old being scolded by my primary school teacher. I think some individuals enjoy having authoritative power and do not brush up on people skills. I was very upset by what had happened however; I was most grateful I was only relieving because to work there permanently would have been a nightmare.

I think I'm getting soft because as I read through my comments I was beginning to think maybe I am being too harsh. That may be the islander in me speaking saying I was wrong to retaliate, maybe I should have just left it alone and just gone home and said nothing to her after.

However, I felt that when the deputy principal and Ms X accused me of not doing a duty I was unaware of in front of other colleagues (if i can call them that), [it] was not only unprofessional but also a perspective in the sense that what they showed to me was their true perception of me. That is a brown-skinned, coconut who doesn't know what she's doing. The way I was treated by these two women was demeaning. I feel I should have said something to the deputy principal also. However, will that get me anywhere or will it truly make a difference to her perception of me or will it only confirm her fears or her ideas of truths about me?

Comment by new principal

During the course of this project the teacher secured permanent work at a well-regarded school. The project team took the opportunity to interview Lefu's new principal:

Lefu just is ... gets on so easily with everybody. I remember the first day, we were practising for the powhiri, and all the new teachers were learning a waiata and our head of Māori immediately thought Lefu was a Māori, and she was very quick to say, 'No, I'm not Māori, everybody calls me Māori, I'm Samoan', and so she defined herself really quickly, so she had that kind of ... that strength. And neither of them would be ... feel separated, I would ... it would be interesting for you to ask them that, but I don't think they have that sense of isolation ... because of their character, then ... but I ... I can't really ask that one. A lot of young teachers may feel alienated by the fact that the average age of teaching is forty-six. You know, I think that probably has an impact too. I've got a young man on the staff who's twenty-two, well, he would probably feel more different from the staff than ... than someone like Lefu.

December 2005:

Given the delicate nature of some of the issues addressed in this case study the team decided to write to the teacher as the project report was being completed to check if she wanted to add or delete any of the elements being included. The teacher replied with the following email reflecting back on her experience:

In term 3 I had a few issues with my Head of Department. I found it to be very difficult to go and confront my HoD. to discuss how I felt. Therefore, I went and spoke to a fellow colleague about my feelings and he advised me to speak to the Headmaster so I did. However, soon word got to my HoD that I was not happy and she confronted me I was unprepared and I'm not very good with confrontations especially when I'm on the receiving end. She was obviously angry with me and I was sorry that her feelings were hurt. However, she misinterpreted why I went about things the way I did. I explained to her I went and discussed my problems with the other colleagues because of respect for her. At this point I was upset I was angry that she spoke to me in an angry and I think in some ways too strong a manner. Through my tears I explained to her I have always been taught to never question those in authority over me. Therefore, I was seeking advice as to how to approach my concerns with her. However, my HoD managed to accept that there was a cultural misunderstanding and that there are some things that she needs to learn about me and my culture.

This experience made me realise that I am still adapting to my surroundings as a new teacher and that other teachers do not have the same understandings of my culture as I do. Furthermore, their perceptions of teaching and professionalism stems from 20 years plus experience whereas I am only beginning. Their 20 years of teaching experience govern their perceptions of what teaching is all about. However, being a new teacher I need to start defining my own journey in teaching. I must mould myself into the teacher I want to be and not allow myself to be moulded by someone else's perspectives of how to teach.

I love my cultural heritage however, I must quote a friend she told me "I need to get some balls" there will be times in my career where my voice must be heard. I must question my

authorities if needs be. However, I will do it in a respectful manner and try and go straight to the source. I will still go to individuals I trust and seek their advice because I'm still new to teaching in many aspects. My perception of teaching is still being moulded it will change as the years go by but one thing I promise myself is that my perception of teaching will come from my own experiences, my own research and from the heart.

Shortly after this was followed by a second e. mail concerning the account of her relieving experience documented above:

Looking back at that experience it was very judgmental of me to think that it was because of my colour that I was treated that way. I think in some ways it was racism or maybe they thought I was slacking off however it's not a excuse to make someone feel so belittled.

I feel that I come across as a racist myself by referring to her as Miss X hence, I feel I'm contradicting. I'm quite confused about this excerpt maybe I'm reading into this too much myself I don't know.

I think I come across too strong in the part where I confront the teacher. Looking back at the experience although I was furious I feel I didn't handle it professionally however, now I am speaking with a more experienced voice I suppose. I recall telling her that I didn't know I was suppose to be on duty and her strong stance that she had she did have an arrogance about her I remember that vividly.

I was wondering if maybe we should omit the part of my confrontation with the teacher mostly because I feel it's only one voice coming through and I appear racist myself. It doesn't allow the voice of the other teacher's perspectives of the situation. I know this may be too late I just want to make the account sound more factual I guess.

The team responded with the following email after which the teacher indicated that she was happy for all material to be included:

... you are much more secure now as a result of getting a job that clearly values you and that you value but whilst you were in a less secure state you were trying to find ways of making sense of the difficulties that you were experiencing. It is enormously stressful job hunting and dealing with this. We can't decide if Ms X was being racist or not but that is how you experienced it at the time and you acted on the assumption that it was racist. ... Ms X was being really insensitive and opened herself to criticism - racism is one way of you making sense of her actions even if she did not see it in those terms herself. And if you were experiencing it as racism then your response may be shaped around that sense that that was the game that was being played.

What we are trying to capture is the process as you experienced it - and it is without a doubt a story with a good outcome that you made good. And this e. mail that you have sent presents you as having dealt with it in an effective reflective manner that shows you able to deal with such stresses in a very different way now that you have become more established.

Appendix B: Some perspectives from principals employing Pasifika teachers

We interviewed four principals of schools which were attended by significant numbers of Pasifika children, relative to other schools in the area. Team members felt that these schools were interested in employing and retaining Pasifika teachers. The principals were all very helpful in giving time and thought to this project. In this section verbatim extracts from some of these interviews are given, which show how some of the concerns which arose from the Pasifika teachers were acknowledged and considered by the principals.

Reasons for/Issues in appointing Pasifika staff

I'm certainly interested because I very deliberately tried to diversify my staff and we've got two Pacific Island teachers permanently appointed with us ... oh no, I suppose X] who's a Fiji Indian would count as well, and I suppose Y who's a Fiji Indian would also count as Pacific Island in some way although I don't sort of see them in that category somehow ... correctly or incorrectly, that's something that could be discussed. But I've got a woman who's Tongan, and a man who's Rarotongan and Cook Island Māori and I ... I believe in diversifying the staff because we've got such an incredibly diverse bunch of kids. But some people who have come from that background have been more successful than others.

You've got a really diverse school so have you got any sort of policies ... do you employ in order to get a diverse teaching staff? Is that a criteria for you?

Very much so. While we'll always try and employ the best person for the position, often that ... what is considered the best person in terms of the person profile is to try and reach out to kids. If you've got a diverse community school as we have then it's absolutely imperative that the teaching profile represents the whole school profile. And in a school like ours, 20 percent of our school are something else New Zealanders, 20 percent are Māori New Zealanders and 60 percent are Pākehā New Zealanders, and so therefore the staffing profile should try and match that as much as you possible can. And so whenever we have a vacancy within the school, I normally will talk to the head of the faculty about the needs of the faculty and then we'll have a good look at the person profile of the faculty and sometimes ... and when I first came here, for example, the maths and science departments were very male ... Pākehā, male dominated so we sort of came to an agreement that we would try and attract females, we would try to attract Māori and the 'other New Zealander' type people into certain departments. English on the other hand, the English faculty was the reverse as it is in most schools. Strong dominance of female Pākehā in that area and so we'd always try to do that. Now, it's more than that, it's about world experiences, world view and some of the staff in our staffroom probably would be unacceptable in other staff ... in other

staffrooms, because they certainly don't fit the stereotyped vision of what a teacher looks like, for a start, and how they act and dress. Umm ... but some of the best teachers in our school - and I've got a hundred and twenty teachers, a hundred and eighty-five staff in total - some of them are these left-of-centre, off-the-wall, bizarre-looking buggers that ... umm are absolutely fantastic people and have a very, very strong empathy for young people. So the issue then when it comes to Pacific teachers ... I mean, New Zealand is getting a larger number of Pasifika youngsters and one of the issues that we're going to have to look at is that we often lump Pasifika as one group, and I think one of the things we're going to have to do very quickly is say, 'Hang on, Pasifika isn't a group, it's a number of subsets, and we're going to have to recognise that some of those subsets are probably more diverse than comparing Pākehā with Fijians, as opposed to Samoans and Fijians, sort of thing. So we have to recognise that our schools, in our diversity, have a larger number of Pacific Island students, therefore we need staff who have a Pasifika empathy or are Pasifika in their own identity.

One of the beliefs that I have in getting more Pacific Island and Māori people into teaching, is that there seems to be a bit of a break between secondary school and university. We're still not making the jump from secondary school into university for a significant number of our Māori and Pacific Island kids. Now I've actually done quite a bit of investigation and would like to do this, where we become like a transition centre, a transition school, a magnet school for Pacific Island and Māori kids who we think can actually make that move from secondary school into university. They may not even have quite the qualifications, they may not have the experience or confidence but they need ... like an apprenticeship, and so what we would do as a school, we might say have ... six to a dozen who are ... they've finished Year 13, and they come to us and they do a year with us, almost like an apprenticeship teacher training, and they then go automatically at the completion of completing the course with us into the first year training college course. And the Training College in Hamilton here, they would be part of the selection process, so ... we could say to the kids as they came through, 'You and I were sitting there at the interview and we agreed, "Yes we'll take this one on"', so there's no other interview, there's not another door that they've got to go through, another sort of hurdle to jump over there. They know that once they've got in with us, provided they succeed with us, then they're going to get automatic entry into the next level. And again, it's those economies of scale, you bring in ... say you just made it the Pacific Island group. Here's Fraser, this is your Pacific Islander apprenticeship group. And they spend a year with us, a dozen of these Pacific Island young people wanting to be teachers and we lift them to the next standard and then they get the automatic entry into Training College.

Enabling Pasifika teachers to fit in comfortably

We're very diverse... people come into our staffroom and express surprise at how interactive everybody is ... I mean you've got one or two people sit in more or less the same place most times, but everybody ... most people move around, move around the groups depending on what's on.

It's not one of these where you've got almost allocations ...

No, absolutely not ... I mean to some extent they have, if you're looking for a particular person, you'd probably look in that corner, and another person in that corner or another person in that corner, but who they sit with from one lunch hour to the next will vary enormously and people move very, very freely between the groups and there's a great deal of exchange at a personal level. I mean, we've got a jolly hard environment in which to work and ... but there is a really strong collegiality I believe, I don't think I'm inventing that. I think it's the sort of feedback I've had from people who've expressed surprise, who've made comments about the morale of the staff and ... you know I foster that in every way possible. So that in terms of the Pacific Island people integrating into the staffroom, they're just part of it. I mean I've got a reasonably diverse staff and they would tend to ... you know as I stop and think about again, he tended to sit with the people that ... in the science department, because they were really mentoring him all the time. They would ... you know, 'How did the lesson go?' and 'da-de-da-de-da' and they actually gave him a huge amount of support, but he didn't always sit with them and ... umm ... the older woman who's a little bit more assertive, umm ... is actively involved in other activities in the school and so she's involved with this group, with that group and so she's exchanging information with this one or that one. So again I ... it's the assertiveness coming in to play there.

My experience with Pasifika teachers would be that they tend to have a different understanding of the hierarchies of school. It's all to do with tradition and responsibility and leadership and so they tend to look at the hierarchy of the school with a certain amount of deference that probably others don't quite see. And there's a shyness that is inherent with a lot of our Pacific Island people, that's not so much the Fijian Indian teachers here, and there again, they're a different subset again. But certainly the true Pasifika ... Samoan, perhaps umm ... Tongan, and the Māori teachers from the Cook Islands, there is a natural shyness and deference which sort of comes from their culture and that would make it a little difficult for them to fit into a pakeha dominated society, if you like, and to some degree it's the same thing with Māori teachers. It's almost an economies of scale problem. You've got to actually build up within your staffroom a number of people of a similar identity and they get ... they ... those people get a ... they awhi each other along and there's a snowballing effect. And umm ... so part of it is to do with that very complex cultural thing of who they are. The other thing is I think ... sadly a lot of our staffrooms, and you will have been through a number of staffrooms, some of them are very inhospitable places which perhaps reflects the learning culture and style of the school, and I'd like to think that our staffroom reflects the holistic version and ... and, yeah ... philosophy of our school.

Another principal offered the following thoughts:

I think the focus was in Māori, but what we have here is an on-going interest in Pacific things. We've got a teacher who's not Pacific herself, who's the head of special needs who's taken a real interest in Pacific Island students as a minority group for many years. And then we've got the Pacific teachers. Now they have done things anyway, like the other night we had a Pacific Island achievement evening where parents and students were invited.

Every new teacher that comes to the school, whether they are an experienced teacher or not, [they] are given a buddy. So there's a buddy teacher you can ask all the 'dumb questions' to and that sort of thing. It's somebody that's not in your department and who you were going

to be working with anyway, its another person so we hope that that helps people with the transition in. We do have every staff member being a member of the committee, so they are all contributing to the wider development of the school, rather than just in their curriculum area, so that builds that collegial thing. The staff social committee is quite strong and organises a lot of staff functions, at least one per term, which not everyone goes to but you have the opportunity to go to it. And I think another strong thing at the school is the lakes. We've got four houses which we call lakes, because they are named after local lakes and the lake feeling is quite strong. The tutor-groups are vertical tutor-groups in the lakes, so each lake has seven tutor-groups. They meet as a lake, the tutors meet as a lake and so as well as belonging to a department, you belong a lake. So there's quite a lot of ties and support networks amongst the staff, even amongst the kids and I think that helps the transition a bit. I think the other thing is, for the Pacific and the Māori teachers it's nice to not be the only ones on the staff, so they have each other as support groups too. It's much easier if there's three of you, than if there's one of you.

What would you see as strategies for being effective in the school in terms of making Pasifika staff more welcome?

One would be having other Pacific staff with them. It's easier to attract someone when they're not the only one. If I was sitting in a school in Hamilton with very few Pacific students in it and trying to attract a Pacific staff member, I think that would be quite hard. Maybe you could find out through the Mormon church people who might be ... but those teachers would probably rather teach at Church College than anywhere else, but that might be something. Living next to a stronghold of their particular church, whatever it might be. Or, if there's any community ... I don't know in Hamilton, is there a Cook Island community or a Samoan community who meet regularly and they will get wider support from being part of that group. I think those side-issues are actually quite important for most of them. I know there are different ones, I don't know if that particularly would affect S in a great way, for example, but I think that she probably would have been happy teaching in Hamilton, but she had it inside her that she wanted to help her own people. So she's come to a place where there's a lot more of her own people that she can help. She's got her family here as well, so having a family connection is important.

I guess they have to feel comfortable with the tone of the school, is there a family feeling in the school? You walk into a school and you get a feeling about the school, and I think that they might get more of that feeling than others do. You're probably walking into different schools and you get a feeling of the school when you walk in. I do when I go to different schools, especially if you're walking around the school and you see the kids. I think the feeling of being somewhere does make quite a deal to somebody. I know of other schools I've walked through and thought, 'I wouldn't like to teach at this school'. How you adjust that is just the overall ethos of the school, the way people in that school treat each other and speak to each other and are friendly or not towards each other, and I think that would make a difference.

Difficulties associated with appointing Pasifika staff

Well, I'm thinking of two people, who came into the school more or less at the same time and one of those people is permanently appointed now, and one of those people I decided not to appoint and with considerable regret, because I think he had a lot of potential, and I ... the issues were; language fluency, competency in the depth of the language. When I did ... that was one of the issues, when I did classroom observations ... are you recording now ... that's fine ... so when I did classroom observations, this person was a science teacher and well qualified, but he didn't have the experiences and the vocabulary to draw on to connect with the students. Umm ... he prepared very, very hard and very, very thoroughly and very, very carefully, but if a student answered with terminology he didn't know, he was floundering ... and although his English was adequate, he didn't have the depth of the language and that became a barrier, and ... in the give and take of a classroom, you've got to be able to respond pretty quickly. You can't stop and think about, 'What did that really mean?' or 'What are the words to respond to that suggestion?', umm ...

So this was a person who'd come from the Islands?

Come from the Islands, done a degree at Waikato and was a person I would love to have had on the staff as a role model, but I ended up not appointing him because of that limitation. The other thing was that ... deeply embedded into his own culture and as a relatively young person, I think had difficulty asserting himself, and he was a very kind and gentle ... lovely person! But not ... I mean in the Island ... I think he would have been fine in the Island situation where the teacher has status, and the kids sit and listen, but in our dynamic where ...

Which is often a shock, isn't it?

Yes, and people from other cultures as well, I think are a little bit surprised at the dynamic of the teaching environment in New Zealand. He had difficulty gaining the respect of some of the children who would have respected someone who could be up-front and assertive.

So this could be a generalisable problem, couldn't it, because that modesty of the young is such a deeply imbued cultural characteristic. And although the person you are talking about comes from the Islands and is perhaps an extreme example, that [...] is still there with the New Zealand born as well?

Absolutely. Yes, yes I don't have enough experience to draw a direct comparison. If I thought about the other person who I have appointed permanently ... highly qualified degree and all the rest of it, from the Islands, a little bit older and a very confident woman who has been able to gain the respect of the kids. And although she has a gentle manner, she can be quite strict when she wants to be and the kids have learned that there are boundaries that of respect.

Relationship between Pasifika and Māori teachers

I think there's a lot more opportunity to develop the Pasifika model than it is the Māori model and I think there's a lot more room for success. And the reason I say that is because my impression is ... umm ... the Pasifika community is far more cohesive and far stronger

than the urban Māori communities and, you know the ... the whanau model has broken down completely, it's a myth. But with the strong church affiliation of the ... many of our Samoan and Tongan kids in particular, if schools can create within their communities linkages back to those churches, and with the elders ... we've got ... I think we've got time to do some [...?] ... in fact we've lost sixty years with out Māori model. If we had been doing this with our Māori community sixty years ago, we would have been far better off than where we are now, but we've got the advantage of time on our side with the Pasifika model and I think this is where it's a relationship and a partnership between that community and I see it very strongly with our own school.

In a very short space of time I've seen some of the Pasifika statistics in this school ... change and ... well, not change, but certainly improve to the level that they're far ... they're in excess of the Māori statistics, especially in the behavioural and social side of things. I've had no Pasifika kids come through this office for suspensions or stand-downs this year. Whereas the Māori statistics are still far beyond what they should be in terms of the ratio of the number of kids and percentages that are there. And I can see, if we move with some degree of haste, but with a lot of thinking, we can actually ... I think we could address the Pasifika issue and ... and where we've got Pasifika statistics matching Pakeha in a very short space of time. And it's simply because of the strength of the community, the potential strength of the community, especially in Hamilton. Auckland might be a little more difficult because of the fragmentation of some of the Pasifika community, but I don't know enough about it, but certainly here I think there's ... [you've\we've] got real chance to do something.

Another principal commented:

Informally. The Māori teachers tend to sit together in the staffroom, staff meetings, that sort of thing, which I haven't promoted, I would like them not to probably, but they do, because that's what they like, that's how they feel comfortable.