P R O T E C T I O N  O F  A U T H O R ’ S  C O P Y R I G H T

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Aspects of Primary Education in Samoa:
Exploring Student, Parent and Teacher Perspectives

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study into aspects of primary education in Samoa. Using student, parent and teacher interview material, I investigate local perspectives on why education is important, what children should learn, how children learn, and what constitutes 'good' teaching. I also look at local perspectives on the place of exams and physical discipline. Fieldwork included classroom observations in rural and urban settings. The thesis documents how children approach learning at school, how teachers go about their work, and how teachers and students interact.

This is primarily an ethnographic study and, as such, focuses on local theories and meanings. However, several broader theoretical areas emerge as important. In the thesis I look at: a) the interdependence between different aspects of school (i.e. curriculum, teaching methods, assessment practices, material constraints, etc.); b) the relationship between primary education and the wider society; and c) the increasing impact of globalisation on education. The thesis challenges the belief that patterns of interaction at school undermine primary socialisation. It also challenges the idea that primary education is an alien Western institution. Formal education has been eagerly embraced, co-opted, and reshaped to ensure consistency with local perspectives and practices.

Increasingly, global flows impact on education in Samoa. This has created tensions between educational policy and teaching practice. Education policies are profoundly influenced by Western ideologies and practices. These reflect fundamentally different ways of thinking about children, their relationships with adults, teaching, and learning. By contrast, teaching practices in Samoa are consistent with local beliefs, values and understandings, and the material realities of a small, fiscally constrained Pacific nation. Policy initiatives are often met with inertia and resistance. The thesis raises issues as to the role of education in maintaining the status quo versus education as an agent of change. It also points to the increasingly difficulty task of defining what is a relevant education and how this is best achieved.
Acknowledgements

It is hard to capture in words the gratitude I feel for so many people who have encouraged, challenged and supported me through this huge task. Firstly, I would like to thank the students, parents and teachers in Samoa who so willingly shared their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. I have that I have represented the gift of your time fairly and insightfully. Secondly, I am indebted to Levaopolo Tuupae Esera, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) in Samoa for permission to carry out this research. I am also indebted to MESC staff for facilitating contact with schools. Thirdly, I would like to thank my main supervisor Dr Ian Frazer and co-supervisors Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Dr Tai Sopoaga and Dr Peter Rich for their support, patience and feedback.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis investigates aspects of primary education in Samoa. In particular, I am interested in the interplay between what happens inside classrooms and the wider sociocultural setting. Behind every human action, including people's organisation of space and time, there are certain values, beliefs, attitudes and understandings. The purpose of this research is to make explicit the values, beliefs, attitudes and understandings that shape how teachers go about their work, how students go about learning and how teachers and students go about relating to each other in primary classrooms in Samoa.

As suggested by the structure of the thesis, this is an ethnographic study. Five of the seven chapters focus on aspects of primary education in Samoa. Consistent with other ethnographic studies, I am primarily interested in the generation of local theory; however, several macro-level theoretical areas emerge as significant. Firstly, I am interested in the relationship between education and the wider sociocultural context. Classrooms, schools and indeed education systems cannot be considered in isolation. Teaching and learning in primary schools are profoundly influenced by a multiplicity of factors beyond the school. The second area of interest is globalisation. Increasingly, education is influenced by the flow of goods, technologies, ideas, information, money, and people across national and cultural borders. Finally, I am interested in the tensions that emerge when new ideas and practices challenge former ways of thinking and being.

The significance of this work

This thesis responds to the call to explore Pacific values, perspectives and paradigms relevant to education (Helu Thaman 1998; Nabobo 1998; Baba 1999; Tupuola 2000; Taufe'ulungaki 2001; Helu Thaman 2002; Nabobo 2002; Taufe'ulungaki 2002). It consciously moves

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1 In each case the call is addressed to researchers of Pacific ethnicity. I am not a Pacific Islander. Like Williams (2004), I suggest that belonging to a particular ethnicity does not necessarily ensure insight into that culture and cultural group. These ideas are explored in more depth later in the chapter.
beyond description. Instead it is primarily concerned with understanding and developing local frameworks of meaning. Using interview material, I reveal how deeply embedded and often tacitly held beliefs, values, attitudes, and understandings influence the nature and quality of teaching, learning and relationships in the classroom. By making explicit the links between what teachers and students do and their underlying beliefs, values, attitudes and understandings, this research provides a critical resource for teachers, teacher educators and educational planners.

This is the first substantial study into primary education in Samoa for almost two decades.\(^2\) The thesis is intentionally broad. This is consistent with the theoretical ideas that are developed, namely that aspects of school life cannot be understood in isolation from each other. How teachers teach and assess, how students learn, patterns of interaction, curriculum, resources, and people’s utilisation of space are part of an interlinked message system or code.\(^3\) Furthermore, it is not possible to consider education in isolation from its wider sociocultural and material setting. In this thesis I explore the interplay between different message systems and practices both within and beyond the school and their impact on teaching and learning. The broad approach also addresses the fact that: a) there has been relatively little research into primary education in Samoa; and b) previous research has tended to focus on one area. It is hoped that this research will provide a platform for discussion and point to areas needing further investigation.

The work honours local voice. Interview material is presented in Samoan and English. This enables Samoan speakers to engage directly with participants’ voices and to ascribe their own meanings to the text. The thesis challenges the belief that formal education in Samoa is largely a colonial imposition and that much of what happens in schools reflects its colonial origins. Whilst the formal structure and much of the curriculum is based on Western models, I argue that the critical areas of teaching practice, student approaches to learning and student-teacher relationships are profoundly influenced by Samoan values, beliefs and

\(^2\) There have been two major research projects looking at aspects of primary education. In 1980, Sutter (1980) completed a doctorate comparing home and school socialisation. In 1987, Va’a (1987a) completed a Masters thesis looking at student-teacher interactions in Science lessons in primary classrooms.

\(^3\) Bernstein (1971) develops the idea that pedagogy, assessment and curriculum form an integrated message system or code and that they cannot be considered in isolation from each other. In Chapter Three, I extend Bernstein's model to include several other aspects of educational practice.
understandings. From this position, formal education has been eagerly embraced, and moulded to ensure consistency with local values and understandings and meet local agendas.

The thesis is also relevant to educators in New Zealand and donor agencies working in Samoa. Over 115,000 Samoans reside in New Zealand. Samoans are identified as a young and rapidly growing population, making up 47.7% of Pacific enrolments (i.e. almost half of the 8.2% Pacific enrolment) in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education 2005). Assessment data indicates that Pacific students are the lowest achieving ethnic group (ibid.). Although an increasing percentage of Samoan students are second or third generation New Zealand-born, the Samoan culture often continues to be a strong influence in their day-to-day lives (Utumapu 1992; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Anae 1998a; Tanielu 1999; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). This thesis provides insight into the ideologies, values, practices and structures that have shaped their lives. The study is also of value for external agencies working in Samoa in that it provides donors and consultants with insight into local aspirations and the relationship between faaSamoa and educational practice.

Locating myself in the research

I am a palagi - white New Zealander, yet for many years, my life has been intimately entangled with Samoa, the culture and many people of Samoan origin. Some 28 years ago, I met and married a Samoan. Together we set off for Samoa, produced five children and what was to be a six-month sojourn stretched to 14 years. While in Samoa, I became increasingly fascinated by different pedagogical styles and the relationship between pedagogy and culture. This fascination was fuelled by an interesting mixture of work, home life and academic background. By day, I taught at a local mission primary school and by evening returned to an extended family where my in-laws held senior positions in the government primary school sector. Frequently, we discussed our respective jobs, educational ideas and what we had done each day. Within the family home, I also observed significantly different ways of relating to

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4 The New Zealand government continues to be a major donor, especially in the area of education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2004).
5 My father-in-law was a School Inspector and my mother-in-law the Head Teacher of a large government primary school. In addition to being supportive and caring in-laws and grandparents, both were keenly interested in educational issues and committed to their respective roles in the education sector.
and engaging with our small children and others. Perhaps in part due to a natural inquisitiveness, perhaps an academic background in social anthropology and perhaps the experience of living in several different cultures, I constantly strove to understand the way people (including myself) thought, acted and interacted.

Several years and two children later we shifted into an old colonial home in another part of the capital. Our home sat in the middle of a cluster of leasehold properties occupied for the most part by low-income families who had migrated from rural villages. Often, I am asked about this period of our life and I find only one word to adequately describe it, namely privileged. We were privileged in multiple ways. We were privileged in the sense that we had a good income but, more importantly, we were privileged to be part of a network of reciprocal relationships that in many ways mirrored aspects of village life. Whilst acquaintances and friends from more affluent areas of the capital, lived within fenced properties and worried about burglaries, we lived without lock and key. Our neighbours were our security and support and we, in turn, provided the car that took the sick to hospital, paid for the medicine, shared food, lent money and contributed to faalavelave - important events.

Insider - outsider

Over the last two decades an increasing number of formerly colonised indigenous peoples have questioned the right of politically dominant groups to research and write about them. Instead they have assertively reclaimed the right to research and represent themselves (Smith 1999). This assertion is based on several premises. Firstly, there are issues of power related to the research process and the act of defining the ‘other’. Secondly, there is the belief that only a person belonging to a particular group can fully understand and represent that group’s experience and worldview.6 Pacific researchers in New Zealand have been strongly influenced by the Kaupapa Maori drive to reclaim research relating to Maori (Baba 2004; Filipo 2004). Living in New Zealand and having researched aspects of Maori education, I was keenly aware of these sensitivities. Before seeking university approval for this topic, I wrote to the Director of Education in Samoa, detailing my interest in education, connections with

6 This perspective is challenged by Kolig (2002).
Samoa, the proposed topic and inviting his response and alternative suggestions. I simultaneously contacted several people in the education sector and expressed concern that I may be perceived as an outsider and encounter resistance. In each instance, the research topic was perceived as valuable and I was reassured that as a person who could speak Samoan, had lived and taught in Samoa for thirteen years and had family and friends there, I was not an outsider. Several also pointed out that the act of reclaiming cultural spaces was an act of those who had lost their language and culture. From their perspective, these concerns were not as relevant to Samoa. 7

I continue to be fascinated by the debate over insider-outsider research and my location within these spaces. A number of writers have criticised the assumption that belonging to a particular ethnicity ensures greater sensitivity and insight into the research process (Williams 2004) and culture (Hall 1991; Taufe’ulungaki 2001; Kolig 2002). This assumption is problematic on two fronts. Firstly, belonging to a particular culture does not necessarily equate with insight into that culture. During fieldwork, I interviewed local people who showed little insight into aspects of their culture and others who were deeply reflective, insightful and knowledgeable. When reviewing previous work on Samoa, I found both Samoan and non-Samoan researchers who had written in insightful ways about the culture. Nor does being Samoan ensure greater sensitivity towards other Samoan people. Samoans in positions of responsibility sometimes show little courtesy towards or interest in people of lesser status. Secondly, in our increasingly globalised world, ethnicity, ideologies, cultural forms and practices crosscut each other. Assumptions can no longer be based on ethnicity alone. We are all an increasingly globalised people, constituted by multiple experiences and identities. As Taufe’ulungaki observed (2001), some Pacific people have so deeply internalised Western paradigms that they perceive the world around them from Western perspectives.

The concepts insider and outsider are ambiguous, grey and slippery. As Saenz asks (1997), who determines who belongs, who does not, and by what criteria? Where do we position the ‘inside’ Pacific person schooled in Western institutions and the ‘outside’ researcher with years of sustained engagement with Pacific peoples and culture (Māhina 2004)? Merton’s

7 Samoans are keenly sensitive to being misrepresented and many reject aspects of Margaret Mead’s research in Samoa (Mead 1949) and Derek Freeman’s refutation of her work (Freeman 1984). Samoans are also aware that
idea of multiple and crosscutting status sets is helpful (1970). Sometimes inside, sometimes outside, but more frequently located somewhere in between, neither inside nor outside. The concepts insider-outsider are not categorical opposites. We all live with degrees of ‘insideness’ and degrees of ‘outsideness’ relative to a range of experiences and interactions. Furthermore our location within particular experiences and interactions constantly shifts. At one point of time, we participate as an insider and then in the profoundly human act of reflection we transpose ourselves into an outsider, separate, analytical, categorising, who captures and represents the experiential self and perceived world in language. Indeed, in the act of researching, even the supposed ‘insider’ is transformed into an outsider (Anae 1998a; Smith 1999).

Rosaldo (1993) suggests that researchers need a double persona of participant and observer. The participant enters and experiences the world of the insider, whilst the observer stands back and reflects on the experience. For Rosaldo the process of knowing involves the whole self. Both insider (experienced) and outsider (observed) perspectives are necessary: “The social analyst is at once cognitive, emotional, and ethical” (ibid.: 181). In the field, I was constantly reminded that not only I as the researcher moved between the multiple positions of insider-outsider but so too did my participants. Indeed, in the very act of asking participants to reflect on their beliefs, values and understandings, we were both positioned as outsiders mutually constructing the ‘inside’.

In the past social anthropology has tended to focus on difference. Airini suggests that when we meet in the realm of the mundane/everyday experience, “The distance between the self and the other may not be so great” (Airini 1999: 10). The term outsider focuses on difference and separateness. Michaelson and Johnson (1997) challenge us that concepts like ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ are of little value when their invocation leads to greater exclusiveness and intolerance. Instead they emphasise the possibility of ‘insideness’, where, no matter what our cultural trajectories, we are bound together by our shared humanity (Arendt 1958; Saul 2002). It is this potential for our worlds to overlap that Rosaldo recognised (1993). Overcome by grief at the tragic death of his partner, Rosaldo finally felt that he could understand the rage of an Ignot headhunter.

some researchers have used people's time and hospitality but made little effort to share their research back to Samoa.
Where do I stand? In many ways, I see myself as both insider and outsider yet neither inside nor outside. Anae (1998b) suggests that the defining point of an insider is an emotional attachment to a particular set. Yet within Samoa (as in any culture) there are multiple ‘sets’ and attachment is not clearcut. Smith (1999) offers an alternative distinction. For her the insider is the person for whom the relationship continues. There is no ready separation from the research participants. In many ways, I feel more comfortable with the label ‘border crosser’ (Michaelsen and Johnson 1997), in the sense of the person who moves across a range of cultural forms and is in the process irrevocably changed.

When writing this thesis I chose not to insert personal narrative in the text. However my research is profoundly influenced by my long involvement with Samoa and people of Samoan descent. In this section, I share one personal narrative to illustrate how in the process of indwelling (Greene 1969; Maykut and Morehouse 1994) we come to better understand another culture. The narrative also points to the value of stepping ‘outside’ in order to comprehend the ‘inside’. Reminiscent of the ‘border crosser’, understanding emerges in the borders. Like the border crosser, I exist inside and outside both my birth and acquired culture, belonging but not fully belonging to either.

A personal narrative: the privilege of uncertainty

During our first three years in Samoa we lived with my husband’s extended family. Like many households, small purchases (e.g. matches, flour, sugar, onions, tinned fish, soap, kerosene) were made from a tiny shop at the end of the road. Frequently we ran out of an item and I would eagerly offer to go to the store. Sometimes I attempted to slip, unnoticed, out the door. Invariably, I was stopped. As a person grounded in anthropology and eager to understand the ‘new’ culture, I was intrigued. ‘Why was I not allowed to go to the store?’ However, I was not merely a young woman interested in social anthropology. I was also a young wife, used to a fiercely independent New Zealand lifestyle and desperately in need of

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8 Saul (2002) suggests that when we are prepared to experience uncertainty we become most human. The willingness to experience uncertainty, to step beyond the boundaries of the familiar enables new experiences and understandings.
exercise, space, and a breath of fresh air as I adjusted to a new household, language, and culture. Quite separate from the intellectual engagement, indeed overriding the intellectual engagement, was an emotional engagement-response, namely bewilderment and frustration.

On a very personal level, I experienced what numerous Samoan daughters-in-law and children experience, namely the thwarting of individual desires and learning to accede to the wishes and demands of people in authority. Initially I did not understand why I could not walk to the small corner store. At a much later date, I began to understand that my mother-in-law was anxious, not about my safety, but about treating me (a well-educated European daughter-in-law) properly. More importantly, she was anxious about how others might observe her treating me, and how they in turn might regard me. Running to the shop for minor items is a job allocated to children and sometimes a teenager and housegirl. Not only did I begin to understand these things but over time they became part of my being and value system. Like the other adults in the household, I too would look for a child to send running down the road. Indeed, I would have felt it inappropriate had I been asked.

How, might you ask, did such experiences inform this research? What did I learn from these experiences that provided ‘overlap’ with participants’ experiences (Rosaldo 1993) and facilitated insight into the Samoan world? Firstly, I experienced the suppression of emotions, loss of personal autonomy and subjugation of personal desire that children (including adult children), teenagers, and daughters-in-law often feel within the extended family. Secondly, I became aware of the public nature of life in Samoa, the constant sense of audience and scrutiny. Thirdly, I learnt that a keen sensitivity to public shame influenced people’s actions. Fourthly, I began to understand that Samoa is a hierarchical society and with each role there is a set of appropriate behaviours. Finally, I learnt that there are alternative ways of being a caring mother-in-law (i.e. the desire to treat and have others treat your daughter-in-law with respect).

Methodology

An eclectic mixture of qualitative methodological approaches influenced this research. Influences include postmodernism, poststructuralism, ethnography and social constructivism. Reflective of the postmodernist movement, the research process recognises the value of
pluralism, relativity, and popular, everyday perspectives. As with the poststructuralist paradigm, there is a resistance to constraining the research process to a particular methodology. There is also recognition and valuing of uncertainty, and an acknowledgment of multiple conceptions of truths and realities. The research is strongly influenced by the ethnographic tradition, and the belief that culture is best understood through prolonged and empathetic engagement/dialogue with the 'other'. Postmodernism, poststructural and ethnographic traditions merge with the recognition of the power imbalances in the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and act of (re)presenting (Limerick, Burgess-Limerick et al. 1996) the world of the other.

The research process is strongly influenced by the social constructivist movement (Gergen 1985). From this perspective the way we experience, perceive and live in the world is determined by our culture, language and idiosyncratic experiences. The social constructivist movement recognises that there are multiple constructions of social reality and ways of viewing the world. Man is positioned as a powerful social agent, a thinking and choosing being. Within this paradigm the human is placed in a primal position in the research process. Ideally the qualitative researcher enters the field with an open mind, accepts ambiguity and uncertainty, recognises and values intuition and feelings (Maykut and Morehouse 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). He/She becomes the ‘research instrument’ (Guba 1990) with the capacity to listen, empathise, reflect, and gain insight into another complex social world. The researcher does not merely gather data but plays a pivotal role in the interpretation of that data (Wolcott 1994; Schwandt 1996). The ethnographer/researcher is also a positioned subject, where age, gender, ethnicity, education, status as outsider, etc. contribute to "a particular angle of vision ... that enable and inhibit particular kinds of insight" (Rosaldo 1993: 19).

The qualitative tradition is driven by a desire to understand social phenomena and acknowledge the diversity of human life. The qualitative researcher and his/her research participants exist in dynamic interplay, each bringing a distinctive set of beliefs, values, worldviews and experiences to the research. Ideally, neither the subject nor the researcher is privileged (ibid.). The power of the researcher is acknowledged but there is simultaneously a desire to make the research subject focal, to hear and value their voice. As in this research, interview excerpts are frequently included and serve several functions. Firstly, they enable subjects to speak for themselves. Secondly, they add validity to the researcher’s interpretation
(Denzin and Lincoln 1994) and lastly, they enable readers to create alternative and/or additional interpretations.

Like the grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1997), interpretation and understanding are ‘born out’ of the data. Rigorous data collection followed by careful analysis leads to the generation of theory. Consistent with the grounded theory model, I resisted early identification of theoretical frameworks. Instead, interest in the relationship between educational practice and its sociocultural setting, global processes, resistance and change emerged out of initial data analysis and developed alongside continuing fieldwork. However, whilst Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasised the generation of formal theory, this thesis focuses primarily on the generation of local theories and meanings.

Ensuring that the research is trustworthy

Both the researcher’s and the researched’s interpretation and representation of the research field are perspectival and therefore limited. The researcher, however, occupies a unique and privileged position in that he/she alone accesses and acts as a conduit for the multiple perspectives of the various informants. The researcher is able to draw together the different threads, and compare, contrast and integrate informant perspectives, with participant observation, and secondary sources. Irrespective of this privileged position, the quality of the research in each instance reflects the quality of the research process.

Kvale (1996) likens the research process to craftsmanship. The validity of the research is established by rigorously seeking out potential sources of invalidity. For Kvale this involves checking for representativeness and researcher effect. It also involves triangulating data (using and crosschecking multiple sources), considering inconsistent data, following hunches, exploring alternative findings and theories, actively seeking feedback and maintaining theoretical coherence. For Eisner and Peshkin (1990) validity lies in the consistency between the research and what it is said to represent.

Many qualitative researchers see the concept of trustworthiness as more applicable to the social sciences (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Wolcott 1997). For Wolcott trustworthiness is achieved by: a) establishing good relationships with research participants; b) careful data
collection; c) recursive writing (writing-reviewing-rewriting etc.); d) seeking feedback on the emerging research; e) returning to the field to crosscheck emerging ideas/findings; f) writing in a way that reveals the researcher's location; g) and including sufficient fieldwork data in the final work (e.g. case studies and interview excerpts) for readers to ascertain for themselves the credibility of the findings.

Throughout this research I used a number of strategies to ensure that the research was as trustworthy as possible. Firstly, I used a range of data collection methods. Data included both primary and secondary sources:

- in-depth interviews with students, parents, and teachers;
- participant observation in primary classrooms;
- discussions and interviews with Samoan educational leaders and researchers;
- review of literature relating to education in Samoa; and
- review of relevant anthropological and sociological literature relating to Samoa and Samoans.

Secondly, the multiple forms of data were compared and contrasted (e.g. interview material, classroom observations, literature etc.). Thirdly, during the research process, I returned to the field several times. This meant that I could crosscheck emerging ideas, seek additional and 'deeper level' interview material, and revisit areas needing clarification. Finally, I presented in Samoa several papers based on emerging findings, distributed copies of papers and reports, and sought feedback, dialogue and debate. In this way 'in progress' work was open to scrutiny, refined and developed.10

This thesis includes a range of interview material. Interview material is presented in Samoan with accompanying translations. Interview excerpts enable the reader to hear the participants' voices and form their own opinion as to the trustworthiness of the research. Lather (1986) suggests that research should have a catalytic effect, meaning that it should re-orientate, refocus, energise and empower participants. In this research, I have endeavoured to take those

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9 Relevant here is the idea of multiple audiences. Feedback is ideally sought from research participants, academic colleagues and other interested parties.

10 I wrote and presented seven papers and/or reports relating to aspects of education in Samoa whilst engaged in this research. Four papers were presented in Samoa. Copies of all reports and papers were widely distributed in Samoa. Several papers were presented in New Zealand. One paper was presented at an international conference in Italy.
aspects of experience that are tacitly held, give them voice (put them into words) and in so doing make them explicit and accessible. The research provides a platform for dialogue, debate and further research. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance teaching and learning in the primary sector.

Readers will find instances where there is duplication of ideas from one chapter to another chapter. This is intentional. Firstly, there are times when values underlying an aspect of educational practice in one chapter are similar to values underlying a different aspect of education in another chapter. In both instances, the topic under discussion cannot be readily understood without reference to the same values. The multiple contexts in which core values re-emerge are consistent with the observation that underlying educational practice is a set of educational values that reflect wider cultural values. Secondly, it is important that each chapter in the body of the thesis (i.e. Chapters Two to Six) form a coherent whole and is able to stand independently. These chapters have been written with teachers, teacher educators and officials in Samoa in mind. In order to make these readily accessible some chapters will be bound separately and distributed to interested parties.

**Brief description of fieldwork**

The fieldwork for this research was carried out over a two year period from 2002-2003. A total of three months was spent in the field. During this time I observed teachers and students at work and interacting with each other. I also conducted a range of interviews. In the first year I focused on: a) data collection in rural settings and b) data collection relating to the Year 8 National Examination. In the second year I focused on data collection in an urban setting. Time was predominantly spent in one rural and one urban school. However, I also spent a brief period as a participant-observer in several other rural and urban schools. From this, I was able to gauge whether observations in ‘field’ schools were consistent with other school cultures and practices. Four schools are referred to in this thesis. To protect their anonymity pseudonyms are used.

Rural interviews were conducted at Folau School, approximately forty-five minutes drive from the capital. Town interviews were conducted at Viliamu School. Schools were identified in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MESC). In both cases these
schools were perceived as reasonably representative of other rural or urban schools. In each context, six students, six parents/caregivers, and six teachers were interviewed. Shorter interviews were conducted with two further groups. In 2002, I interviewed six Year 8 teachers about the Year 8 National Examination and in 2003, I interviewed or met with five educators from MESC and the Faculty of Education (FOE), National University of Samoa (NUS). The bulk of interview material came from student, parent and teacher interviews. These interviews lasted between 1 1/2 – 2 hours each and were recorded over one to two sessions.

The research process

In interviews participants frequently referred to the importance of the *va fealoa'i* - relations of mutual respect. At each level and at each stage of the research process, I took great care to move through appropriate channels and approach people with respect. From New Zealand, I wrote to the Director of Education for feedback on the proposed topic and/or alternative suggestions. On receipt of written support, I proceeded with the research. On arrival in Samoa I met with the Director, who assigned a Senior School Review Officer (SSRO) to facilitate fieldwork in schools. The SSRO in turn contacted a School Review Officer (SRO), who contacted Head Teachers. Points of contact are illustrated below and indicate the importance of status relationships and protocol in Samoa.

![Diagram of hierarchical relationships](image)

11 Pratt (1912) defines *fealoa'i* as, “to mutually display respect”.

13
Some Pacific and Maori researchers have questioned the appropriateness of Western ethical procedures in Pacific contexts. Tanielu (2002b) and Fonua (2004) conclude that consent forms in Samoa and Tonga respectively are inappropriate in cultures that value face-to-face interactions. Fonua describes the signing of forms as alienating and unfamiliar, creating contestation as to who should sign and implying that the researcher doubts the word and integrity of participants. Like Tupuola (1999), I chose to follow both Western and Samoan protocols. I met with each participant (i.e. valued face-to-face interaction) to discuss the research, their role, consent forms and provide an information sheet about the project. Both the information sheet and consent form were presented in Samoan, and in clear, accessible language. In each case, I explained that the consent form was a university requirement. I found that participants had experienced contexts in their lives that involved signing contractual relationships (e.g. visa requirements, negotiating bank loans, legal matters etc.). Consent forms did not suggest a lack of trust towards the participant. Rather, the consent form represented a commitment on my part, as the researcher, to act in a trustworthy way (i.e. to respect their confidentiality).

In some instances, ethical procedures were adapted to accommodate Pacific values. Reflective of the fact that in Samoan culture, adults have authority over their children (Suaalii and Mavoa 2001), parents and caregivers were asked to give permission on their behalf for interviews. I used a number of strategies to balance this. Before the interview process began classroom teachers explained the research. Children were then asked by the teacher if they would like to participate and, if willing, took an information sheet and consent form home for a parent/caregiver to sign. Before each interview, I verbally asked each child if they were happy to be interviewed. Pacific researchers also emphasise the potential for statements made during interviews to cause 'collective shame' and/or embarrassment (Anae, Coxon et al. 2001; Suaalii and Mavoa 2001). I attempted to overcome this by emphasising the right to not answer questions, clearly defining in the information sheet and pre-interview discussion.

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12 Refer to Appendix i - iii for examples of Information Sheets and Appendix iv-vii for examples of Consent forms.
13 Given the cultural expectation that children display deference and respect towards adults and comply with their wishes it is not possible to ascribe or assume autonomy in the consent process to the child.
14 Suaalii and Mavoa (2001) emphasise the potential for children in interviews to reveal information that might cause shame and/or embarrassment or negatively impact on their immediate and extended families and community.
the parameters of the study (i.e. relating to education) and my commitment to confidentiality. Significantly, several parents and teachers expressed strongly that they felt more comfortable talking with a non-Samoan. As a *palagi* - white European (albeit able to speak Samoan and connected by family), I was perceived as not as deeply embedded in local relationships and less likely to *faitala* - gossip. Not stated but equally important, as an ‘outsider’ I had fewer opportunities and reasons to use disclosed information/knowledge for personal or family gain.

Recently there has been a proliferation of literature on Pacific research methodologies (Anae 1998b; Anae, Coxon et al. 2001; Taufe’ulungaki 2001; Sanga and Pasikale 2002; Foliaki 2003). For the most part these works call for greater involvement of Pacific peoples in Pacific research and the recognition of Pacific values, perspectives and practices in the research process. However, as noted by Baba (2004) this work tends to be strong on protocol but weak on philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. Sanga (2004) attempts to address this in his paper exploring the philosophical bases of indigenous Pacific research. I approached my fieldwork like Anae (1998a), who argues that what the Pacific most needs are anthropologists who care about people. Anae states, “In all anthropological investigations, mutual trust and understanding must be built carefully and sensitively. As with any human relationship, reciprocity, responsiveness, commitment and responsibility are essential” (ibid.: 23).

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15 Several parents and teachers stated that Samoans were *faitala* - gossips/liked to talk about other people and their lives. In interviews, I explicitly stated that I did not want names mentioned (e.g. when discussing good/bad teachers). I found that, as in New Zealand, there were individuals who liked to talk about other people and their business and those who were careful not to.

16 Reminiscent of the literature on the phenomena of cultural nostalgia (holding an idealised image of past and present cultural forms) (Hanson 1980; Linnekin 1991; Featherstone 1995; Michaelson 1997; Clifford 2001) there is a tendency for some Pacific writers to make romantic and idealised statements as to what constitutes Pacific methodologies. For example, Anae et al. (2001) states that, “To avoid the dominant mono-cultural research framework, Pacific peoples must prioritise their ‘holistic’ perception of knowledge and scholarship, oral communication style and protocol of consensus and respect” (Anae et al. 2001: 10). I find such statements problematic. Firstly, there is no elaboration as to what constitutes a ‘holistic’ perception of knowledge and scholarship. Secondly, there is a lack of realism. The statement fails to recognise that Pacific perceptions and practices relating to knowledge might sometimes be problematic in the contemporary world. As noted by Tupua Tamasese Efi (2004) in the past knowledge was often regarded as tapu and carefully guarded/restricted. Rather than calling for the reification of traditional practices, Tupua Tamasese Efi calls for their reappraisal and a lifting of such tapu. Tradition ideologies about knowledge continue to influence people’s attitudes and actions. During this research, family members strongly advised against sharing my ‘in progress’ research lest anyone ‘took’ my ideas. Thirdly, even in contemporary Samoan society, the statement that Pacific peoples must prioritise their ‘protocol of consensus and respect’ (ibid.: 10) is simplistic and represents an idealised representation of the culture. The statement does not acknowledge that in many instances processes and decision making are not
Core values that guided the research process

Samoan researchers have identified a range of cultural values central to the research process (Utumapu 1992; Anae 1998a; Tanielu 1999; Anae, Coxon et al. 2001; Tanielu 2002b; Filipo 2004; Silipa 2004). These include the concepts of reciprocation, faaaloalo - respect, tautua - service to others, feagaiga - relationships of mutual obligations/responsibilities, fealofani - good will, loto mauailalo - humility, and alofa - love. Of overriding importance in Samoa are the concepts of reciprocation and faaaloalo - respect. One of the key challenges in this research was finding appropriate ways to thank and acknowledge the various individuals and groups involved.

In Samoa reciprocation was expensive and involved considerable investment of time and energy. Reciprocation occurred in numerous forms depending on audience, context and circumstances. Reciprocation included food, goods, money, time, small acts of thoughtfulness like offering teachers transport home/to town, providing interviewees the opportunity to ask questions, ensuring research findings were written in accessible language, finding opportunities to orally share 'in progress' research and distributing completed papers and reports. Reciprocation also included people indirectly involved with the research (e.g. morning tea for an obliging library staff, gifts and monetary contributions for faalavelave - important events, to the extended family). In each context, I was deeply aware of my financially privileged status as a New Zealand-based researcher. Whilst ethical protocols in New Zealand discourage the gifting of money to research participants, this was frequently the most appropriate and useful form of reciprocation.

Several Polynesian researchers describe sharing their research back to participants as an important form of reciprocation (Anae 1998a; Smith 1999). In her doctorate research, Anae recognised multiple audiences (i.e. academic and research participants) and that between and within each group there are again differing levels of literacy and analysis. Anae addressed this by writing for different audiences in different sections of her thesis. I have used Anae’s model in this research. The body of the thesis (Chapters Two to Six) is written with teachers, teacher negotiated. Rather, those in high ranking positions have the power to define meaning and assert their authority over those of lesser status (Duranti 1994; Huffer and So’o 2000; Meleisea 2000).

17 Appendix xiii elaborates on the different kinds of reciprocation in this research.

16
educators and MESC personnel in mind. The text is presented in clear, accessible language, and includes interview excerpts in Samoan and English. Smith (1999) describes reporting back the research findings as another form of reciprocation. I endeavoured to do this during the research process. Over the last three years, I sought out opportunities to present sections of the research to a range of audiences and distribute copies of reports and papers to libraries, MESC, NUS, FOE, donor agencies and interested individuals in Samoa. Not only was this an important form of reciprocation but it also enabled locals to scrutinise and critique ‘in progress’ research.

Approaching research in a culturally appropriate way is not a straightforward exercise. Firstly, as Anae (1998a), Anae et al. (2001), and Tupuola (1999) observed Samoans do not form a tidy homogenous group. Tupuola found her role as a researcher working with Samoans in New Zealand as “negotiable and flexible, unpredictable and contradictory” (ibid.: 7). She concludes that whilst faaSamoa principles were important, “The extent to which they are used, however, depends on the backgrounds of the participants. That is, the different learning and communications styles and the diversity of the participants’ identities needs [sic] to be considered” (ibid.: 7). Indeed Tupuola found that sometimes in observing one Samoan protocol she inadvertently found herself accommodating behaviours inconsistent with other aspects of faaSamoa. For Tupuola, part of respecting her young adult participants involved giving them voice. This in turn meant allowing them space to criticise, refute and argue. In this research, the act of interviewing children, seeking their opinions, perspectives and feelings is inconsistent with a culture where children generally listen and defer (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996), are seen but not heard.

Sometimes being culturally appropriate involved acting in ways inconsistent with personal values and preferred patterns of interaction. Observance of status divisions sometimes conflicted with a personal commitment to egalitarianism. When interviews with parents ran into lunchtime, the loss of privacy and increased noise level forced a temporary break. In New Zealand, I would have invited the parent into the staffroom, and offered them food and a drink. In fieldwork schools parents were uncomfortable about entering staff areas and generally not invited. One staff member strongly criticised her principal for allowing parents

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18 I observed one exception during interviews. One interviewed parent was a former teacher and familiar with the staff. She joined the teachers for the faafaga - meal provided by a village family. I queried several colleagues...
into the staff room, claiming that by her action she had “Ua solia le mamalu o faiaoga” (trampled on the status of teachers). Often when making the 45-minute trip back to town, I would offer a ride to women and their children waiting at the side of the road for a bus. When accompanied by teacher/s they would often say, “Tuu ia e pue le past” (Leave them to catch the bus). Similarly, Schoeffel (1979) and Gershon (1999/2000) found that relationships became easier for all parties when they put aside principles of egalitarianism and adapted their behaviour to the local context. Over time Schoeffel found herself taking on an almost uninterested and distant persona with adolescent members of her household and Gershon learnt to accept “hierarchically embedded” relationships (Gershon, 1999/2000: 63).

A range of other problems/issues associated with the research emerged during fieldwork. In some instances my presence as a researcher was counter-productive to improving educational outcomes for students. On several occasions, parents kept a school-aged child at home to look after a younger sibling or baby so that they could attend the interview. In some instances my presence in the classroom and school significantly disrupted routines and reduced learning opportunities. Special morning teas to meet and farewell the visitor cut into class time. In both schools, the library was set aside as the interview area. In the classroom some teachers used my presence as a reason to engage in conversation rather than teach. Conversely, in some classes, work output dramatically increased. My presence as a researcher also changed classroom dynamics. Sometimes, teachers organised students into performance rituals (e.g. getting children to sing songs, chant their tables, etc. for the visitor). My actions also influenced teachers’ location in the classroom and their interaction with students. Teachers were often uncomfortable sitting at their desk while I, as the higher status guest (and frequently the older person), stood. Conversely, if I sat in the teacher’s desk, this was no longer an available option for them. If I moved around the room engaging with students about their work, teachers were more likely to do so. I attempted to overcome the ‘observer effect’ by repeated visits to the same classroom, and discretely ‘busying’ myself with alternative tasks (e.g. sitting at an empty desk and looking at children’s books) whilst observing classroom activities and interactions.

about why parents were uncomfortable about entering teacher zones and teachers’ unwillingness to open up their spaces. In each case, colleagues felt that the relative status of the parent was an important factor. All felt that if the parent was perceived as high status (e.g. holding/or married to a person holding an important position as in the case of a high ranking matai - chief, faifeau - minister, or successful business person), they would be welcomed into these spaces.
The interview process

The main form of data gathered for this research is interview material. This form of data is consistent with the primary purpose of the thesis, namely to explore local beliefs, values, aspirations and perspectives relevant to learning and teaching at the primary level. Like Lincoln and Guba (1985), I approached the interview as a conversation with a purpose. At all times interviews were driven by a quest for understanding, recognised the participants as “analysing subjects” (Rosaldo 1993: 47) and valued their role in the negotiation and co-construction (Tripp 1983; Maykut and Morehouse 1994; Scheurich 1995) of the emerging research. However, at all times, I was keenly aware that the world view and experiences that I brought to the interview both restrained and enabled the interview process and subsequent data analysis. The data that emerged reflect myself as the researcher and the lived experiences of the research participants. As noted by Polanyi (1962) our ability to perceive the world of the other is consonant with our capacity to observe and comprehend it.

The quality of the interview process and resulting material depends directly on the interviewer, the interviewees, and the level of rapport and trust established between the parties involved (Oakley 1986; Maykut and Morehouse 1994; Kvale 1996; O’Leary 2004). Taking time to follow cultural protocols, chat and establish rapport is especially important in the Samoan context (Anae 1998a; Anae, Coxon et al. 2001; Tanielu 2002b). I began each interview with a formal welcome (adapted in each case to the relative status of the interviewee and context). I then: a) revisited the purpose of the research; b) found an opportunity to share something about myself (e.g. my interest in and relationship with Samoa, my nuclear and extended family; a photo of my children etc.); c) established common ground or links; d) re-elaborated on my commitment to confidentiality; e) sought permission to tape; and f) discussed the idea of the interview as a conversation (i.e. where they were welcome to ask questions, raise matters of interest and not respond to questions).

19 During interviews many children stated that their class seldom used the library.
In an effort to acknowledge and value the multiple voices within school communities and the educational sector, I interviewed a range of groups. As stated earlier interviews were conducted in two schools (one rural and one urban). In each setting six students, parents and teachers were interviewed. Additional interviews were conducted with educational 'experts' and Year 8 teachers. Interviews took a variety of forms depending on the context, intention and participants. Interviews with students, parents, and teachers were planned around a semi-structured interview guide. However, in reality interviews were open-ended, flexible and to some degree unpredictable in content. The interview guide provided a valuable prop and checklist.

Each interview varied in subtle ways depending on the context, purpose, interviewee, stage within each interview and stage within the research process. Within each interview, questions were intentionally layered. I began with low level (e.g. factual) non-threatening questions (Patton 1990; Maykut and Morehouse 1994). As the interview progressed and rapport was established, I introduced questions that were more personal and required a deeper level of analysis. Questions also varied in content and type depending on the interviewee group (e.g. student/parent/teacher/educational expert) and information sought. Questions also varied depending on the stage in the research process. On completion of rural interviews, I returned to New Zealand, translated, coded and analysed taped material. Patterns emerged, hunches grew, issues and thoughts became clearer. Over time a set of additional questions emerged that were integrated into urban and educational expert interview schedules. I intentionally conducted interviews with educational experts towards the end of the research process. This group was for the most part tertiary educated, well travelled and knowledgeable in their respective fields. Many were interested in the research, its findings and implications. By leaving interviews until a later stage, I was able to provide completed papers, seek feedback on the papers, respond to questions and ask questions appropriate to their level of expertise.

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20 Interviews were for the most part conducted in Samoan. I found working in a second language challenging when the subject involved abstract, philosophical material. At such times, the interview guide provided a useful prop.

21 Patton (1990) identifies six types of questions (experience/behaviour, background/demographic, feeling, knowledge, sensory, and opinion/value). I found that I also used analytical and meta-cognitive type questions.

22 During the course of the research, I learnt not to make assumptions about interviewees. Some of the most interesting, challenging, and thought provoking conversations occurred with parents and teachers.
Limerick and Grace (1996) describe the interview as a gift and that in accepting the gift the researcher is compelled to treat the material with respect and sensitivity. Throughout the transcription, translation and data analysis stage I felt privileged to be party to the thoughts and insights shared but also full of trepidation at the responsibility and power entrusted. The researcher’s location and role is unique, accessing a range of different human experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The researcher as recipient has the potential to draw together the threads, crystallise ideas and put the pieces together like a jigsaw. The researcher ultimately decides what to include, what not to include, and how to present it. Indeed as noted by Cricks (1997b), the researcher’s power is unrivalled and ultimately any emerging work is the researcher’s story of the researched.

Transcription

On completion of fieldwork, I had 41 interviews lasting 1 1/2 to 2 hours each. Almost all of the tapes were in Samoan. Between the two fieldwork trips, I began to transcribe and translate one set of teacher tapes and listen to other tapes. Material fell into three broad categories, namely a) highly relevant, b) possibly relevant, and c) not relevant. Adapting an abstract technique described by Duncan (1997), I decided to: a) transcribe in full highly relevant material; b) abstract, paraphrase and partially transcribe possibly relevant sections; and c) create a descriptive label for irrelevant sections.

Several issues arose with the recording and presentation of transcripts. In educational research, interview excerpts are generally presented in an unedited form. Two factors led to subtle changes in the presentation. Firstly, in Samoan, written language is generally recorded using t and n (‘good’ speech) as opposed to the k and g (‘bad’/everyday speech). For the most part interviews with teacher educators were in English. When a concept or idea could not be readily expressed in English we slipped into Samoan. Occasionally teachers and one student used some English. In interviews with teachers, I sometimes resorted to English to express an abstract idea. Almost always, the teacher chose to respond in Samoan.

For example, I would categorise a discussion on discipline as highly relevant, a discussion re family members living overseas as partially relevant, and my response to a question about my family as not relevant. In Samoa, the t and n form is often described as tautala lelei - good speech, whilst the k and g form is labelled tautala leaga - bad speech (Ochs 1988; Tanielu 2002b; Tamasese 2004). Ochs (1988) observes that ‘good’ speech is more likely to be used in socially distant relationships and in particular contexts like school, church, national media, and printed material. ‘Good’ speech is frequently used on formal occasions. People move quickly and easily between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ speech. Independent of the words spoken, choice of ‘good’/‘bad’
interviews, I almost always used the polite t and n. Some respondents used only the t and n form and some moved between the t and n, and k and g forms.) Initially, when transcribing I recorded all excerpts in the formal t and n. Significantly, when I reread excerpts, I used contextual cues to differentiate between the two forms. For example, I read “E ese le leaga o le teine” as “E ese le leaga o le keige” (The girl is so bad). Stricken with concern about faithful rendition of the speaker’s voice, I reviewed and ‘corrected’ anomalies. However, on a subsequent fieldtrip, participants were adamant that they wanted their speech recorded in the t and n form and that the k and g appeared mataga - ugly. Indeed, participants were uncomfortable to see their speech presented in the k and g form.

Secondly, there are divergent opinions as to the use of macrons and glottal stops. A recent paper by Tupua Tamasese Efì (2004) reviews three schools of thought. At one extreme no markers are included. At the other extreme, every macron and glottal stop is inserted.26 In this thesis I use the third and middle position. Macrons are used only when and if the meaning might otherwise be unclear. For example, in the following excerpt I use a macron to differentiate between le - negative form and le - the: “A le fasia e le fai 'oga, e atili ai le ulavale o le tamaititi ma le le faalogo.” (If the teacher doesn’t hit the child his/her naughtiness and poor listening will become even worse.) Conversely, I do not use a macron or glottal stop in the word fai 'oga (faia 'oga) because the meaning is readily understood. Glottal stops are inserted when the meaning might otherwise be unclear. For example, I use glottal stops to differentiate between la 'u/lo 'u - my and lau/lou - your.

Translation issues

26 Tanielu (2002b) and Tupua Tamasese Efì (2004) include a discussion on the use of macrons and glottal stops. In 1980, the Department of Education under the leadership of Dr Aiono Tagaloa Fanaafi removed all markers. Fanaafi argued that markers confused the reader and serve no function for the native speaker. Recently, there has been extensive debate about the pros and cons of macrons and glottal stops and MESC has reintroduced them. Newspapers tend to follow the middle position (i.e. use markers when and if the meaning might otherwise be unclear).
All full and partial transcriptions were recorded in Samoan and subsequently translated into English. A number of issues arose in the translation process. Firstly, there was the challenge of colloquial speech. I dealt with this by including both the intended and literal meanings. For example, with the expression *Ma lau fee!*, I gave 'shame' as a loose translation and bracketed the literal meaning (e.g. 'Shame on you! [literal meaning - Shame your octopus]'). Secondly, some concepts in Samoan have no ready equivalent in English. In these cases, I included both the Samoan term and a general translation. If necessary, I added an explanation in a footnote. Thirdly, in some cases it was difficult to produce grammatically correct translations. In part, these tensions reflected structural differences between the languages. For example, Samoan uses *ia* for third person singular irrespective of gender. In the translations, I use he or she if the speaker is clearly referring to a particular gender (e.g. a daughter). When the speaker is making a general reference, I use he/she. A more difficult issue arose when grammatical constructions suggested profoundly different ways of thinking about the world and relationships. For example, many sentences in Samoan make no reference to the subject (Duranti 1988). This is illustrated in the following excerpt: "E tatau ona aoao ina ia usitai i le faiaoga, ia malamalama lelei. Aua, a usitai ma faalogo lelei, e malamalama foi." (should be taught to be obedient to the teacher, so that [they] can understand well. Because, if [they] are obedient and listen/pay attention [they] will also understand - RP6). To ensure that the translation flows and makes sense, I have inserted the subject (they). However, the insertion masks a subtle linguistic difference and fails to communicate to the reader that the subject is frequently assumed rather than stated. The diminuation of subject/identity in language is consistent with a society that downplays individuality and instead focuses on the importance of relationships and collective well-being.28

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27 Bell (1991) describes the idea of equivalence between concepts in different languages as a chimera. He groups words into two broad categories. Denotative words tend to be referential and their meanings unambiguous (e.g. chair). By contrast connotative words refer to the "associational, subjective, and affective" (ibid.: 99). These words are invariably more difficult to translate. In an earlier work (Pereira, 2001) I suggest that the distinction is sometimes problematic. Often denotative terms have quiet different connotative associations for different groups of people. For example, the term church suggests very different feelings, images and experiences for palagi - white New Zealanders and Samoans.

28 For an extensive discussion on the relationship between Samoan language and Samoan culture the reader is referred to Duranti (1994).
**Interview excerpts**

Throughout this thesis interview excerpts are presented in Samoan and English. This enables Samoan readers to hear for themselves the speakers' voices, and ascribe their own meanings to excerpts. This approach also addresses the shortcomings of translation. No translation catches the subtleties or precise meaning of the source language (Bell 1991). I have made no effort to adhere to original sentence structures. Instead, translations focus on conveying meaning and expressing this in grammatically correct, everyday English. Translations have been reviewed by three native Samoan speakers.

Interview excerpts are labelled to indicate the speaker. Rather than using a pseudonym, each speaker is identified by a code. The code enables the reader to contextualise who the speaker is (i.e. student/parent/teacher/educational expert) and where they come from (i.e. rural/urban). This information enables the reader to reflect on the relationship between an interviewee’s response and their physical and social location. Coding is as follows:

- **st** student
- **P** parent
- **T** teacher
- **Edex** MESC staff member or teacher educator
- **R** rural
- **U** urban

The code Ust3 means urban student, number three, whereas the code RP5 means rural parent, number five.

**Theoretical frameworks**

As stated earlier, this thesis is primarily an ethnographic study that focuses on the interplay between the micro-context of the classroom and its wider sociocultural setting. The purpose of this thesis is to make explicit these relationships and develop local theories and frameworks of meaning. However, several theoretical areas emerged as relevant. These are briefly reviewed. This section begins a synopsis of several comparable micro studies and a general discussion about the Relationship between education and the wider sociocultural setting. As noted by Tavana (1994), Coxon (1996), Tanielu (2002b), and Tolley (2003), it is no longer
possible to restrict analysis of education in Samoa to its local setting. In the postmodern world, sociocultural settings stretch far beyond national borders. Under the heading \textit{Globalisation}, I consider the relevance of global processes to this study. Finally, I look at \textit{Local responses to global processes}.

\textbf{Relationship between educational practice and wider sociocultural context}

Across a diversity of geographical and cultural locations other classroom studies reveal a dynamic relationship between what happens in schools and the wider cultural context. In a comparison between student beliefs, aspirations and understandings in French and English primary schools, Planel (1997) found that historical factors, cultural values and contemporary ideologies profoundly influenced student learning, teaching styles and interaction patterns. Planel observed that in the French system, teaching methods were more rigid, authoritarian and content-focused. Teachers adhered closely to a tightly defined curriculum and programme. Relationships with students tended to be formal. Planel contrasts this with English primary schools, where students had greater autonomy over the pace and content of learning, teacher control tended to be ‘hidden’ and the relationship between students and teachers more informal. Planel then links these differences to cultural and structural differences in the respective societies. Planel concludes that cultural values give rise to educational values, which in turn give meaning to pedagogical styles.

In Third World countries educational researchers have made similar observations. Arthur (1998), in a study of primary education in Botswana, Africa, looked at the relationship between interaction patterns in school and the wider community. Arthur concluded that “broader social forces” (ibid.: 314) shape communicative practices in classrooms and that teachers need to explore their ideological baggage and how it impacts on the micro-processes of student-teacher interactions. Paradise (1994), in a study of non-verbal interaction patterns in Mazahua, Central America, investigated how mother-infant/young child interactions shaped children’s relationships with peers and teachers at primary school. Paradise observed culturally specific, non-verbally organised interaction patterns where Mazahua mothers and their young engaged in a “separate-but-together way of interacting” (ibid.: 157). In a range of activities, mothers and their infants/young children did not directly engage with each other, but showed “cooperation and coordination of their activities and attitudes” (ibid.: 162). Observation of 5th and 6th grade Mazahua students and their teachers revealed close
correlation between mother-infant/young child and student-student and teacher-student interactions.

In the Pacific, Helu Thaman (1988) found that the wider cultural context profoundly influenced Tongan educational values and practices. Tongan society placed an emphasis on appropriate behaviour, respect for rank and authority, the importance of social relations and tradition and the need to display restraint in one's interactions. These in turn, translated into a belief that the primary function of education was moral and social. In Samoa, several researchers have emphasised a discontinuity between school culture and home socialisation (Sutter 1980; Duranti and Ochs 1986). However, several other studies suggest that cultural values and practices in the wider community influence what happens in school. Va'a (1987a) in her detailed study of science lessons found that the cultural value of respect impacted on how students and teachers interacted with each other and worked against the introduction of inquiry based learning. Moli (1993) and Esera (1996) also found that teachers' personal beliefs influenced how they went about their work.

Teaching, learning and student-teacher interactions are shaped by their sociocultural setting (Broadfoot 2000; Stoll 2000; Murphy and Ivinson 2003). Woodrow (2001) observes that no education system is without values and that these values are deeply held, culturally specific and reflect wider cultural values. Woodrow calls for educators to recognise formal education as a social construction and acknowledge that different cognitive styles and pedagogies reflect different cultural settings. Arthur (1998) takes this idea a step further and suggests that formal education and the wider society exist in dynamic relationship with each other. Arthur points out that teachers and students occupy multiple subject positions. As they move between different subject positions (e.g. parent/teacher) they carry values, beliefs and understandings from one context to the other. However, it is important to acknowledge that even small societies like Samoa are not homogenous. Whilst pedagogical discourses are linked to larger moral discourses and practices (i.e. in the wider community), these are not necessarily supported by all groups (Singh and Sinclair 2001). Indeed, in this thesis there are repeated instances where conflicts arise between competing voices within both the educational sector and the wider society.

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29 This position is strongly refuted in several chapters of this thesis.
Whilst a number of researchers in Samoa have discussed the relationship between culture and schooling in Samoa (Galo 1966; Sutter 1980; Duranti and Ochs 1986; Tavana 1994; Tavana 1997), most portray formal education as an alien institution. In this thesis, I take a very different perspective and show that the way teachers approach their work, the way students approach their learning and the interactions between teachers and students are profoundly influenced by the wider sociocultural context. A primary focus of this research is to make explicit the sociocultural values, beliefs, understandings, practices and structures in Samoa that influence life inside primary classrooms in Samoa.

A number of educational researchers have attempted to construct models to better understand the relationship between education and its setting. Coxon (2003) argues that adequate analysis of the educational setting must take into account historical and material factors. Bray (1998) suggests that analysis is best achieved through a multidisciplinary approach. In reference to exams in the Pacific he advocates that analysis embraces the disciplines of political science, economics, public administration, and sociology, as well as education.

Figure 1: Overlapping fields in the study of education in small states (Bray and Packer 1993: 237, in Bray 1988: 220).

Planel (1997) proposes a model to illustrate the relationship between pupil culture, pedagogy and the wider cultural context. In Planel’s model, traditions and historical background, social and cross-cultural factors, and policy change create a national cultural context within which pupil culture interacts with pedagogy. Whilst her model emphasises the multiplicity of social forces that shape contemporary national culture and schooling, it does not recognise the interactive relationship between school-based culture and the wider society. Nor does it acknowledge the physical, material and economic constraints within which schools operate.
Globalisation

The term ‘globalisation’ is used to refer to a multiplicity of crosscutting and interlinked processes. Education in Samoa is increasingly impacted on by these processes. These processes are not new. What is new, however, is their speed and intensity (Featherstone 1995; Appadurai 1996; Sahlins 2000; Clifford 2001). Over the last century there has been a dramatic compression of relationships across time and space (Robertson 1992; Appadurai 1996; Edwards and Usher 1997; Stromquist and Monkman 2000; Tikly 2001; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Increasingly, actions distant in space impact on the here and now. In the modern global world, interaction is increasingly disembedded and presence and absence are simultaneously connected (Gidden 1990). The present is haunted and enabled by the absent (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). The impact of the disembedded ‘other’ was constantly apparent during fieldwork. Participants frequently referred to remittances from distant family members that sustained day-to-day life, enabled participation in status and relationship building activities, and met school-related costs etc. On the international level, aid policies and funding decisions facilitated access to resources, the building of new schools, and exposure to alternative pedagogies.

Recent technological advances have led to a dramatic increase in the speed and intensity in the movement of ideas, information, goods, images, and people across national and cultural borders (Featherstone 1995; Edwards and Usher 1997; Stromquist and Monkman 2000; Clifford 2001; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). However, these flows are not even in their effect. Differences exist between and within nation states. Indeed, some individuals and groups within nation states remain almost untouched. Differences are also evident across the different dimensions of globalisation (i.e. ideological, material, political, financial, cultural and social).
Carnoy (2000) in a comparative study of educational systems found that whilst global ideologies had a strong impact on national policies, these did not necessarily result in changed practices in classrooms. In this thesis, there are numerous instances where policy reflects Western-influenced pedagogies and ideologies, but classroom practices and interaction patterns remain unchanged. The flow of goods and information is equally uneven. At the National University of Samoa, staff and students accessed a relatively well resourced library, photocopiers, computer suites and the internet. Conversely, staff and students in Folau School (i.e. a village school) had no phone or copying facilities. Books were limited in number, dated, often in poor condition and inappropriate in reading age and content.

Global flows are increasingly multi-directional (Crick 1997b) and do not necessarily correlate with specific ethnic groups. Whereas, during the colonial period, flows were often perceived as centre-to-periphery, increasingly formerly ‘periphery’ groups are relocated to old ‘centres’. The increasing presence of the once ‘periphery’ in the centre has interesting implications. Firstly, the ‘centre’ is transformed by the presence of once distant ‘periphery’. Secondly, the once ‘periphery’, now relocated to the ‘centre’, is to varying degrees reshaped by the ‘centre’, and thirdly, this group becomes a powerful carrier of new ‘centre’ global *scapes* back to ‘periphery’ locations. Consistent with this analysis, Samoans are an increasingly mobile, global, and diasporic community (Ward and Ashcroft 1998; Meleisea 2000; McGrath 2002). Many maintain active relationships with family in Samoa and contribute to the movement of cash, goods, ideas and people to and from their homeland (Bertram and Watters 1985; Bertram 1999). In interviews in this study, over half of the adult participants had spent time in Pacific Rim countries as tertiary students, workers or visitors. All participants had extended family members residing overseas and often participants had relations in several Pacific Rim countries.

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30 In the following discussion of centre/periphery relations, I use apostrophes to indicate the contested nature of ‘what’ and ‘who’ constitutes centre/periphery.
31 Appadurai (1996) uses the suffix *scape* to describe five dimensions of global cultural flow. These include ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes.
32 Bertram and Waters (1985) and Bertram (1999) typify Pacific economies as dependent on migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy (i.e. MIRAB economies). Bertram (1999) suggests that MIRAB economies should be seen as viable economic strategies in the Pacific. He portrays Pacific peoples as active agents and concludes, “In the MIRAB economy the indigenous population maximise their material well-being by the management of the globalisation process” (ibid.: 107).
Increasingly cultures crosscut national boundaries and are dislocated from their points of origin (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). No longer bounded by cultural and national borders, ideas, goods, information, people, cultural images and structures move readily across space and time. The dislocation of culture from its point of origin and the relocation and transformation of cultural forms have a number of implications relevant to this thesis. Firstly, culture is no longer as readily definable. In the modern global world, cultures have become increasingly complex and contradictory phenomena constituted by often apparently disparate groups, a range of practices, beliefs, values, understandings and forms. Throughout this thesis, there is a multiplicity of voices and practices that at times converge and in other instances diverge. Over time it has become increasingly difficult to make definitive statements as to what does or does not constitute faaSamoa - the Samoan world and way.

Secondly, all cultures are in a constant process of flux, dismantling and reconstruction. From this perspective, no culture is static (Giddens 1994). Rather, “[a]ll cultures borrow, lend, adapt, and distort elements from other cultures” (King 1999: 245). As such, culture is a “temporary phenomena” (Featherstone 1995: 135), “a volatile, eternally metamorphosing condition rather than a stable entity; that it is, on an individual level, constantly formed and reformed by individual creativity, inventiveness and self-interested enterprise” (Kolig 2002: 13). In reference to the Pacific, Clifford (2001) suggests images of invention, transformation, borrowing, losing and rediscovery. In Samoa, these processes have resulted in an erasure of the boundaries between the traditional and introduced (Liu 1991) (Kruse Va’ai 1998) and the proliferation of alternative cultural forms and identities (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Kruse Va’ai 1998).

Thirdly, some nations and individuals and groups within different nations have greater power in cultural production and the process of change (Featherstone 1995). In the past, New Zealand as the former colonial power was the primary external influence on education in Samoa. Today, a number of Pacific Rim countries and international agencies compete to provide finance, negotiate loans, and exert influence (Tavana 1994; Coxon 1996; Tanielu 2002a; Tolley 2003). Tolley (2003) documents the intensifying pressure for Samoa to

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33 Pacific Rim countries include New Zealand, Australia, Canada, China, and Japan. Key international organisations include: Asian Development Bank, European Economic Community, International Monetary Fund, 

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conform to standardised global models and international trends, ideologies and priorities in education. Heeding Baba’s (1999) call to creatively resist such pressures, Afamasaga (1999) laments that whilst teachers struggle to teach the three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic), they are confronted with a new set of Rs, namely Reforming and Restructuring. Afamasaga (2002) challenges the applicability of business models to education in Samoa and describes teachers as “floundering in the swamp as we tried to come to terms with terminology such as inputs, outputs, strategic plans, corporate plans, performance indicators, performance budgeting and now re-engineering” (Afamasaga 1999: 14). At the local level, educated elites mediate and manipulate the flow of ideas, cultural forms, information, goods and finance. In reference to Samoa, Tanielu concludes, “the articulation of ‘national’ interests and priorities are (sic) left in the hands of only a few” (Tanielu 2002a: 103).

Fourthly, global flows do not necessarily disrupt and undermine traditional structures. In Samoa, new ideologies sometimes challenge former ways of thinking and doing. For example, internationally funded conferences, returning nationals, modern media and global ideologies on children’s rights challenge the physical punishment of children. This combined with enforcement of school policies banning physical punishment is perceived by many as undermining traditional values. Conversely in other contexts, global processes sustain and strengthen traditional structures and practices (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Kruse Vaai 1998). As mentioned earlier, remittances from relatives overseas enable family members in Samoa to participate in traditionally valued activities (e.g. title bestowals, church openings, and funeral exchanges). Such activities strengthen social cohesion and provide opportunities for status enhancement.

In the Pacific, globalisation is often described as a new form of colonisation (Crick 1997a; Baba 1999; Kolig 2002; Nabobo 2002). Whereas in the past, a single colonial power acted as the primary conduit of Western goods, structures and ideologies at any one point in time, now a multiplicity of Pacific Rim and other nations exert their influence (Bray 1993; Nabobo 2002; Taufe’ulungaki 2002). In Samoa the once coloniser-colonised relationship has been replaced by arguably even more powerful donor-recipient relationships that influence and constrain the education sector (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Coxon 1996; Afamasaga 1999; United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation, United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank (Department of Education 2001; Tanielu 2002a; Tolley 2003).
Significantly, those that play central roles in the implementation of Western structures and ideologies are frequently Western-educated indigenous elite (Crick 1997a; Taufe'ulungaki 2002; Tanielu 2002a) who “have partially or wholly internalised Western values, beliefs and knowledge systems” (Taufe'ulungaki 2002: 9).

Crick (1997a) and Tilky (2001) challenge the description of today’s world as postcolonial. Instead they conclude that relationships between the developed and third world retain numerous features of colonialism. Crick identifies a range of features central to the colonial period. These include:

1. the unevenness of colonial impact. In some instances colonial influence was pervasive whilst in other instances it was minimal;
2. the colonised were not passive recipients. People residing in colonies responded in divergent ways to colonial influences;
3. adaptation was multi-directional. Indigenous groups made adjustments to colonising powers and colonising individuals/groups/powers made adjustments to indigenous populations;
4. indigenous elites often played a central role in speeding colonising processes;
5. indigenous groups are not homogenous. This diversity contributed to divergent responses to colonisation;
6. within the colonial period there were often competing colonising voices (e.g. traders versus missionaries);
7. colonial powers often acted as arbitrators of tradition (Crick 1997a).

Most of these features have been identified in the preceding discussion on globalisation. The last point, however, deserves special mention. Throughout this thesis there are numerous instances where global processes juxtapose Western ideologies against Samoan values, beliefs and understandings. In the education sector aid personnel, MESC officials and teacher educators frequently compare, contrast and judge local teaching practice against Western pedagogies and educational ideas. In this way Western ideologies and their carriers continue to act as moral arbitrators. However, these processes are not one way. Those whom we research are also analysing and reflecting subjects (Rosaldo 1993) who make moral judgements. In this study, students, parents, and teachers were fiercely critical of the indulgent way in which many Westerners taught and parented and the lack of respect children displayed towards adults.
The debate as to whether global processes lead to homogenisation of cultural forms or contribute to greater diversity is also relevant to Samoa. One school of thought suggests that global processes lead to both (Robertson 1992; Green 1997; Lee 2000). A second school of thought rejects the homogenisation theory and emphasises the proliferation of new cultural forms (Hall 1991; Hannerz 1991; Featherstone 1995; Edwards and Usher 1997; Crick 1997a; Sahlins 2000; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Tolley, in a detailed study of donor-recipient relations in education in Samoa, concludes that local control over national education policies and structures is eroded by “an increasingly mono-directional homogenised approach to development” (Tolley 2003: 142). She cites pressure to comply with global models and ideologies and an increasing intrusion in sovereign affairs and governance. By contrast, Kruse Va’ai’s research (1998) on language change in Samoa emphasises the emergence of new cultural forms.

During the course of this study both processes were evident. On a national level, there was clear evidence of homogenisation. Increasingly, the New Right market model and its associated discourse pervade the education sector. Hence the former Director of Education is renamed the Chief Executive Officer and official documents refer to inputs, outputs, strategic plans, performance indicators, performance management systems, etc. Conversely at the micro-level, the meeting of Western practices and the Samoan world has created unique cultural forms. The Year 8 National Examination provides an excellent example. This exam originated from the New Zealand Proficiency Examination (Barrington 1968). Structurally, the exam has remained relatively unchanged. However, it is accompanied by a range of distinctly Samoan practices. At Folau School, each Year 8 National Examination was preceded by a collective prayer. Teachers and Year 7 students served visiting examiners breakfast and a lavish lunch, speeches were exchanged and visitors presented with an *ato taitai* - basket of food.

In the postcolonial period of indigenous revival, there has been a tendency to describe global processes in negative terms. Globalisation is criticised for its homogenising effects and its role in cultural loss. Recently, there is a call to recognise its positive effects. Cvetkovisch and Kellner (1997) comment that whilst global forces might challenge and at times undermine traditional structures and ideologies, they also create new opportunities for emancipation and the possibility of new forms and ways of being and thinking. This is illustrated well by Fairbairn-Dunlop’s (2001a) research on physical punishment and her challenge to create a
‘third space’ (i.e. solutions that embody both the old and new in alternative ways).\textsuperscript{34} Demythologising the often nostalgically imagined past, Baba and Coxon (1997) and Nabobo (2002) point to patronage politics that plague many Pacific nations. Indeed it could be argued that such nations would benefit from Western ideologies of equality and social justice. Robertson (1992) points to an interesting contradiction in indigenous responses to globalisation. He notes that global processes are often met with resistance and criticism but that these very acts of resistance (and the accommodation of such acts) are in themselves ‘modern’ phenomena.

\textbf{Local responses to global processes}

Samoans like all cultural groups have through time responded in multiple ways to global processes. Angus challenges the assumption that global processes in education are external impositions. Instead, he points out that global forces are “heavily mediated in context” (Angus 2004: 39) and responses range from active acceptance through to resistance. Within each response there are again multiple nuances. Engagement, accommodation and resistance may be conscious/unconscious, informed/uninformed, active/passive or purposeful/accidental. Sahlins (2000) and Crick (1997a) strongly reject the image of Pacific Islanders as passive recipients of global processes. Crick uses three different ethnic groups to document three very different responses to globalisation. In a detailed comparative study, he shows how the Kwaio in Malaita, Solomon Islands, responded with resistance, the Afro-Caribbeans from Nevis, West Indies, by active adoption of a global identity and the Chambri, in Papua New Guinea, by selective accommodation.

In the context of Samoa, responses to global flows are complex, crosscutting and at times contradictory. Indeed, a number of issues make responses to global forces difficult to classify. Firstly, \textit{global flows are mediated by multiple players at multiple levels}. At the national level aid programmes promoting child-centred pedagogies are mediated by MESC officials, local consultants, teacher educators and inservice trainers. At the micro-level of the classroom, new ideas and practices are mediated by principals, teachers and students. At each level there is a filtering effect and global flows are subtly and at times substantially transformed. Secondly, \textit{different groups in society and different individuals within groups respond in different ways to}

\textsuperscript{34} Fairbairn-Dunlop’s study is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
global flows. Whilst Western-educated Pacific educators tend to take on board Western pedagogical ideas, village teachers are more likely to actively and passively resist their application.

Thirdly, responses tend to vary depending on the dimension of global flows (i.e ideological, material, structural etc.). Whilst locals eagerly embraced the material benefits of donor-funded school buildings and resources, in other contexts they simultaneously resisted Western ideologies that undermined core cultural values and practices. Fourthly, the processes by which global flows are facilitated determine in part their acceptance, accommodation and/or rejection (i.e. who and/or what medium 'carries' or 'embodies' new forms, ideas, structures, etc.). For example, the recent Institutional Strengthening Project (ISP) teacher inservice programme recognised shortcomings of previous projects and attempted to address these using a range of new strategies. These strategies included: a) sustained inservice delivery; b) instruction and facilitation in the Samoan language; c) use of local teachers as trainers; d) inclusion of all principals and teachers; e) distribution of support material in Samoan; f) contextualisation of inservice content through localised delivery; and g) monitoring and feedback at local school-level post-inservice meetings (Lake 2001; Redden 2002).

One of the main consequences of globalisation is a heightened self-consciousness of one's own culture. Indeed Giddens (1994) describes this reflexivity as the global condition. From this perspective, identity is relational (Michaelsen 1997; Saenz 1997). Jameson describes culture as "not a 'substance' or a phenomenon in its own right" but a "nimbus perceived by one group when it comes into contact with and observes another one" (Jameson 1993: 33). In our encounter with the 'other' and our recognition of alternative ways of thinking, being and doing, a self-consciousness emerges about what and who we are. Rosaldo (1993) points to an inverse relationship between power and awareness of 'having' culture. Culturally dominant groups tend to see themselves as culture-less. Conversely, minority or threatened cultural groups develop heightened awareness of their collective identity. In such instances, the formally tacit lived culture becomes explicit (Polanyi 1967; Giddens 1994; Featherstone 1995). In this research, I was constantly surprised by the self-consciousness of participants as to what constituted faaSamoa - the Samoan way, as opposed to Western ideologies and
practices. Significantly, Samoans as a minority culture in New Zealand display a heightened awareness of cultural identity (Anae 1998a; Tupuola 1999; Bell 2000) and in some contexts more rigidly adhere to Samoan practices than Samoans in Samoa (Polu 2000). As also noted by Featherstone (1995), the encounter with the 'other' sometimes leads to an oversimplified and falsely united image of cultural identity.

Closely linked to the idea of self-conscious culture is the concept of agency. Samoans show a keen sense of agency in their encounter with the Western world (O’Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Meleisea 1992; Kruse Va’ai 1998; McDade 2002). In interviews adult participants frequently juxtaposed *palagi* - white European ways against *faaSamoan* ways of thinking and doing. Some explicitly talked about taking the best from both cultures. Hence an urban father (UP5) was profoundly influenced by Mormon teachings on family life and rejected the harsh physical punishments experienced during his childhood. However, he was equally uncomfortable with ‘soft’ Western parenting. Instead, he resolved that he would firstly counsel his children and hit them only if absolutely necessary. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) points out that perhaps our sense of agency is a fallacy. In the act of taking on board new ways of thinking or doing, we unwittingly take on other hidden elements. A key point in this thesis is that you cannot change pedagogical practices (e.g. introduce child-centred teaching practices) without causing other unanticipated changes within and beyond the school.

As stated earlier, people respond to global flows in a range of ways. In some instances, global flows are met with active acceptance, sometimes ambivalence, and sometimes resistance. More frequently, the encounter is one of mutual accommodation and negotiation. “Cultural materials just do not transfer in a unilinear manner. They always entail interpretation, translation, and customization on the part of the receiving subject. In short, they can only be understood in the context of their complex reception and appropriation” (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 17). Liu (1991) uses the image of fishing to suggest selective appropriation. Kruse Va’ai (1998) suggests a process of cultural domestication where aspects of the ‘new’ culture are taken and transformed so that they become acceptable within the *faaSamoan*. She calls

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35 This self-consciousness has been noted by Liu (1991) and Gershon (1999/2000).
36 In the preceding paragraph Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) challenges the assumption of agency and control over the process over the appropriation of new cultural items.
these new forms 'cultural hybridities'. A third process is suggested by Hall (1986a; 1986b). Hall uses the image of articulation, in the sense of an articulated truck, where things are hooked on or off. In each of the examples there is a sense of contingency and agency, and a recognition that cultural forms are not fixed.

Several chapters of this thesis show that accommodation and adaptation of new cultural forms are facilitated by ideological and structural similarities between aspects of the 'old' and 'new'. Put simply, 'new' values, beliefs, understandings, ways of seeing the world, and practices are readily adopted, accommodated and transformed when they have a high level of cultural fit and appeal. For example, in Chapter Three: Understanding Learning and Teaching, I suggest that teacher-centered pedagogies (introduced during mission and colonial periods) are consistent with Samoa's hierarchically structured society and the belief that children should respect and defer to adults. These similarities led to the rapid adoption of teacher-centred practices and their resistance to change.

Several further points deserve brief mention. Firstly, local responses to global processes are not new phenomena. The same processes have been occurring within and between societies through time. Secondly, these processes continue to occur in a range of contexts. For example, Dooley, Exley and Singh (2000) in their analysis of how state policy is transformed at the micro-level of the classroom in Australia identify similar processes of contextualisation, refraction and rearticulation. Thirdly, it is often assumed that small and developing nations are least equipped to deal with the increasingly globalised world. The concept of 'border crossers' challenges this position (Anzaldua 1987). Anzaldua points out that colonised groups of people often have had many years of experience living at the interface of cultural movement and change.37 By contrast, people from centre-dominant countries are less experienced with encountering and negotiating 'new' cultural forms.

In this thesis I suggest that certain cultural dispositions facilitate cultural adaptation. Furthermore, I suggest that teachers have a key role to play as cultural mediators in enabling students to live effectively in an increasingly globalised world. Teachers as specialists in

37 In reality, different groups and different individuals within these groups in colonised societies were exposed to varying degrees of interaction with colonising processes.
cultural production can enable students to develop flexibility in code switching\textsuperscript{38} (Featherstone 1995) and can participate in the creation and implementation of pedagogies that foster adaptability and competency in an increasingly globalised world (Edwards and Usher 1997).

**Setting the scene: locating the field**

Samoa\textsuperscript{39} is located in the South West Pacific and includes four inhabited islands covering a 2785 sq. km. area (Statistical Services Division Government of Samoa 2001). The two larger islands, Upolu and Savaii, are volcanic and have fertile coastal strips. Of the 176,710 people residing in Samoa, 133,886 (just over three-quarters) live in Upolu. This figure includes almost 38,836 in the capital, Apia. The population has a high child-adult dependency ratio with 41% under the age of 15. Almost 99% of the population are Christian (ibid.).

Two thirds of the population are dependent on a semi-subsistence lifestyle and for the most part reside on customary land (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998).\textsuperscript{40} Right of access to village land lies with the aiga - extended family and associated matai - chiefly title/s. Tanielu describes the aiga - extended family as the basic social and economic unit in Samoa. In this context, “the matai directs the economic, social and political affairs of the family” (Tanielu 1995: 1). The extended family and village provide informal social and financial support. Increasingly, family networks extend beyond the boundaries of Samoa. Of the total population of over 340,000 Samoans, approximately half reside in Pacific Rim countries (Ward 1998). Bedford (1999) describes Samoa as a transnational community or meta-society spanning a number of countries. Samoans in Samoa and abroad maintain active relationships and there is a constant two-way flow of goods, people, and money (Ward and Ashcroft 1998).

As in many small Pacific nations, Samoa’s development is hampered by fiscal constraints. Unpredictable agricultural markets, plant disease, and natural disasters have contributed to a

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\textsuperscript{38} The term ‘code switching’ is used here to mean the ability to move between different cultural paradigms. This idea is explored in more depth in the Conclusion.

\textsuperscript{39} Samoa was formerly known as Western Samoa. Samoa gained independence in 1962.
decline in agricultural production and increased dependence on waged employment. Remittances from family members residing overseas and international aid play a central role in sustaining the economy, enabling infrastructure development and maintenance of present standards of living (Liu 1991; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Asian Development Bank 2000; Meleisea 2000). Lack of finance is a major constraint on educational development (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Treasury Department 2002; Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003) and Samoa continues to depend heavily on international aid to realise its educational aspirations (Coxon 2003; Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003; Tolley 2003).

Over the last decade, Samoa has experienced rapid economic and social change. There is increasing migration to Apia in search of paid employment, educational opportunities, and greater personal freedom. These processes coupled with migration overseas have contributed to increased reliance on waged income, weakening of the extended family, and a trend towards smaller family units and individualism (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Meleisea 2000). Associated with recent changes there has been an increase in the range and incidence of social problems (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998) and growing social inequalities (O’Meara 1990; Tanielu 1995; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Asian Development Bank 2000; Meleisea 2000). As in many small Pacific states there are also high levels of corruption (Liu 1991; Meleisea 2000; Polu 2000; So’o 2001).

40 82% of the land is customary tenure as opposed to 3% that is individually owned. The remainder is government land. Government land includes WSTEC (Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation) land. This land was confiscated from German landowners during the First World War.

41 The Samoan economy readily fits into Bertram and Watters (1985) MIRAB model. The MIRAB economy is heavily dependent on migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy for its continued survival.
Brief overview of primary education in Samoa

In 2003, 39,639 Year 1 to 8 students were enrolled in primary education. Of this figure 83% attended one of the 141 government primary schools, 15% attended mission schools and 2% private schools (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003). Eighty-six percent of government primary schools are classified as rural whilst 14% are classified as urban (Department of Education 2002). Education is compulsory but not enforced by law. At the last census 94% of 5 to 9 year-olds were enrolled at school. Census figures indicate high levels of absenteeism in lower levels (Year 1 19.1%, with this declining to 9.2% in Year 8) (Statistical Services Division Government of Samoa 2001). MESC endeavours to have a teacher:student ratio of 1:30. In 2003, 68% of schools achieved this (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003).

Many government schools are poorly resourced. One third of enrolled students do not have chairs or desks. Of the 141 government primary schools in 2003, four had computers, three had televisions, 28 had phones and 24 had photocopiers (ibid.) Readers and books, when available, are generally dated, in poor condition and inappropriate in language and content. Fairbairn-Dunlop and Associates (1998) partially attribute the poor quality of primary education to a lack of financial commitment and poor priorities. They note that in 1996-7, all children had access to primary education, yet only $355 per capita was spent at this level. By contrast, 4% of students accessed tertiary education where $6,553 per capita was spent. These

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42 Given the breadthness of this thesis it is not possible to give a detailed historical review of education in Samoa. However, when researching this thesis, I consulted a range of resources on the history of education in Samoa. Detailed references included Galo (1966), Barrington (1968), Coxon (1996) and Tanielu (2002b). Two observations emerged. Firstly, in Tanielu’s documentation of mission education, she emphasises the role played by the ‘native’ Samoan pastor-teacher in village education in the 19th and early 20th century. She specifically notes the comparatively small number of European missionaries. Likewise, Barrington documents the continuing importance of mission education through the German and New Zealand administration. In the 1920s the New Zealand administration began to gradually take over Aoga Tulaga Lua (Grade Two Schools) and pastors retained control of Aoga Amata (Grade One schools). It was not until the late 1940s and in response to several international missions highlighting the poor state of education in Samoa, that significant change occurred. Barrington gives figures for the number of Samoan versus European teachers in the primary sector during the New Zealand administration and up until independence. Throughout this time, a handful of non-Samoans taught in government primary schools at any one point in time (Beeby and Renyard 1945; Beeby 1954; Barrington 1968, Beeby 1968). Barrington and Beeby also document the resistance New Zealand officials met when they attempted to get teachers to move away from authoritarian teaching styles and exam centred practices.

43 Participation rate for 5 to 14 year-old students in 2003 was 95% (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 2003).

44 Recently, Australia funded a project called the Primary Education Materials Project (PEMP). The project funded the development, printing and distribution of booklets to support each curriculum area at each level, some ‘hands on’ resources and inservice. PEMP booklets provide quality reading material for students.
disparities continue. In 2003, $6.6 million dollars were spent on the National University of Samoa (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003), despite the fact that many primary schools lacked basic furniture, equipment and resources. Reflecting international trends towards supporting basic education (Tolley 2003), New Zealand and Australia have increased their focus on primary education in Samoa. Likewise the Government of Samoa identifies primary education as a priority area.

Government and villages share responsibility for primary education. In most instances villages continue to provide land and school buildings, whilst the government meets teachers’ salaries, supports the delivery of the curriculum and provides some resources. Delivery of education is overseen by School Review Officers (SRO), who encourage “strict adherence to department policies and curriculum” (Lee-Hang 2003: 15). SRO officers also act as conduits of information between the central MESC office and schools. Relationships are explicit and hierarchical. SROs oversee the work of Head Teachers, who oversee the work of teachers. Staffing continues to be an issue. Low salaries, poor working conditions, lack of resources, low status associated with primary teaching as a career, plus an increasing range of alternative salaried employment options, contribute to teacher shortages (Coxon 1996; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Rawlinson 2002). Rawlinson records a shortfall of 50 teachers in 2002 and an anticipated shortfall of 170 in 2004. He also interviewed senior secondary students and found that most saw primary teaching as a default option (i.e. pursued only when access to a more desirable tertiary option was blocked).

Classroom practice is for the most part teacher-centred and authoritarian (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esera 1996; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a). Teachers adhere to a narrow and tightly defined curriculum covering five core subject areas (English, Samoan, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science). Learning is for the most part constrained to the classroom (Esera 1996) and students at all levels participate in

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45 Personal communication. (Meeting with Dr Penelope Ridings, New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa, 19/9/02.) In 2003/4, New Zealand spent $8.2 million on aid to Samoa. 70% of this was spent on education and training. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) identifies primary and secondary education in Samoa and the development of curriculum materials as focus areas (www.nzaid.govt.nz).
46 There is an increasing trend towards villages seeking international aid and/or loans to build or rebuild schools. The recent Samoa Educational Sector Development Project, funded by a loan from the Asian Development Bank, has rebuilt and provided resources for selected village schools in the Apia area. These schools absorbed many of the Malifa Compound students when it closed at the end of 2002.
47 In 2003, there were 1119 primary teachers (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 2003).
regular tests and exams (Pereira 2002b; Pereira 2003; Sooaemalelagi 2004). Education continues to be highly valued with almost universal literacy in the Samoan language. However, national assessments at Years 4 and 6 identify a significant number of students at risk (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003).

**Educational policy**

Although educational policy was not intended to be a central theme in this thesis, issues relating to policy emerge in each chapter. Any discussion of contemporary educational practice and the multiple voices that form educational discourse in Samoa requires consideration of relevant government policy. In 1995, following a period of consultation the Department of Education published policy objectives for the 1995-2005 period (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995b). Four broad aims form the backbone of these and subsequent documents. These include a commitment to quality, equity, efficiency and relevancy in all sectors. Policies relevant to this thesis include a commitment to educational practice that:

- is “relevant to the individual learner, to the community and to the nation”;
- “combines indigenous and global knowledge”;
- will “Ensure the systematic presentation of essential knowledge by means of a sound bilingual methodology”;
- will “develop the ability to analyze knowledge critically in a learning environment which encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought”;
- will “stimulate imagination and allow for individual expression”;
- will “foster the holistic development and self-esteem of individual students”;
- will “encourage both a strong sense of indigenous identity and an international perspective”;
- will “Promote the social and cultural foundations of education”;
- will encourage “activity-based learning programmes with an emphasis on problem-solving skills”;

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48 Coxon (1996) considers in detail the development of educational policy in Samoa.
49 These policies continue to be referred to in subsequent MESC plans and reports.
Ball (1998) describes national policy making as a process like bricolage, where ideas are borrowed, copied, and adapted. Problems arise when policies are inconsistent with widely held cultural values and practices. Planel (1997) challenges educators to identify both educational and national values and ensure that education policies are consistent with these. She notes that when policies are perceived as consistent with values they are more likely to be taken on board. Policies are mediated by multiple social actors at multiple levels. Bernstein calls this process recontextualisation and observes that "every time a discourse moves, there is space for ideology to play" (Bernstein 1996: 24). Reflecting the competing interests and voices within and between societies, policy is an increasingly contested area.

Throughout this thesis a number of recurrent issues relating to policy emerge. Often there are disparities between stated policy and classroom practice. In some instances disparities reflect ambivalence or resistance to policy initiatives. For example, Chapter Three shows that few teachers encourage students to "develop the ability to analyse knowledge critically in a learning environment which encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought" (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a: 10). Disparities between policy and practice reflect deeper and even more subtle disparities. Policies are not value free. Educational policies reflect educational values and ideologies, which in turn reflect wider cultural values and ideologies. Tensions between policy and the values and ideologies underlying them reappear throughout this thesis.

Policy development and implementation are not neutral processes. Throughout the thesis, there are competing voices as to what constitutes good educational practice. Contestation occurs at multiple levels. Coxon (1996) in her study of policy development in education in Samoa repeatedly emphasises tensions between global and local interests. Pacific educators passionately speak out against the transposition of Western ideologies and policies under the guise of aid. In a united voice, they call on Pacific people to research and document Pacific paradigms, values and pedagogies and develop policies and practices that reflect these (Afamasaga 1999; Baba 1999; Taufe'ulungaki 2001; Nabobo 2002; Taufe'ulungaki 2002). Tensions also exist within Samoa between different interest groups. Despite MESC's commitment to policy-making processes that are consultative and participatory (Department of Education 2000), policies tend to reflect the values, beliefs and understandings of a small
cross section of the population; namely an educated, well travelled, and economically advantaged urban elite.

Tensions also exist between different dimensions of development policy. Coxon’s study (1996) shows how International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) policies often constrain education policy and implementation. Baba (1999), Nabobo (2002) and Tolley (2003) observe that political, economic, and social agendas are reflected in neo-liberal, New Right ideologies and that these ideologies drive educational policy and aid. There is also a tendency to transpose New Right ideologies, perceived as problematic in Pacific Rim countries, into the Pacific. This is evident in Samoa. Closely paralleling the devolution of educational management in New Zealand, the 1995 policy documents (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; 1995b) call for decentralisation of school management, the introduction of school charters, three-day team reviews, and grading and merit systems for high performing teachers. Nabobo argues that neo-liberal ideologies do not work in poorly resourced Pacific communities and lead to greater social inequalities. She concludes that policy and education must be located “within the economic and social structure of the society” (Nabobo 2002: 43).

Issues also arise when one educational policy works against the implementation of another. For example, whilst MESC promoted “the systematic presentation of essential knowledge by means of a sound bilingual methodology” (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a: 10), some teachers, schools and Head Teachers actively ignored this policy. Instead they choose to prioritise English as a subject and language of instruction. Chapter Six shows how their decision is in part a consequence of contradictions within MESC policy. In this instance MESC’s policy to maintain the Year 8 National Examination and assess four of the five curriculum areas in English (i.e. a second language for most students) pushed schools to focus on English. In so doing it directly undermined the policy relating to a

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50 During the two fieldwork trips (2002 and 2003) there was no evidence of these procedures having been put in place (i.e. new school committee structures, charters, merit systems). However, at an inservice one MESC employee talked about the possibility of performance based pay.

51 MESC continues to support, as an interim measure, the Year 8 National Examination. In four of the five curriculum areas (English, Maths, Science, Social Studies), students are assessed in English. As the results determine students’ secondary options, competence in the language of assessment (i.e. English) is of prime importance.
‘sound’ bilingual methodology and led to outcomes that contravened two of the four policy aims (i.e. quality and equity).

Whilst MESC explicitly recognises the need to “take into account that political, economic, social and cultural structures constrain and determine acceptance and rejection of policies” (Department of Education 2000: 6), this thesis shows that policy is often inconsistent with the values, beliefs and understandings of participants. Planel (1997) emphasises the power of children in mediating and potentially sabotaging educational policy. In fieldwork schools, there were numerous instances where students and teachers passively or actively, consciously or unconsciously, ignored policies because the policy/policies required them to take on board practices that were inconsistent with their beliefs, ideologies and preferred practices.

Overview of chapters

The body of this thesis is made up of five chapters focusing on aspects of primary education in Samoa. Each chapter draws on interview material, classroom observations, and secondary sources. Chapter Two: Local Perspectives on Education and Student Achievement, explores values, beliefs and understandings that underlie primary education. In the first section I suggest that school serves a pragmatic function, enabling children to acquire the necessary skills to find work and secure a good future. More importantly, school enables children to fulfil important social responsibilities. The primary purpose of school is to become *poto* - clever/wise/intelligent/skilled in an academic and moral sense. Participants were keenly aware of differences between children and described in detail a range of factors that contributed to this. Chapter Two also looks at the influence of: a) *toto/gafa* - blood/lineage; b) *fa'amāaniuaga a le Atua* - blessings of God; c) the *siosiomaga* - (home) environment; d) poverty; and e) issues relating to urban versus rural schooling. The chapter unsettles the claim that formal education is primarily a colonial imposition and alien to Pacific culture. Instead, I suggest that whilst structural elements of formal education reflect their Western origins, much of what happens within primary classrooms is profoundly influenced by distinctively Samoan aspirations, beliefs, values and understanding.

Chapter Three: Understanding Learning and Teaching, begins with an exploration of local perspectives on how children learn in informal and school settings. Responses closely align
with the two strands identified in the concept *poto*. Firstly, participants emphasised socially valued behaviours and personal qualities that assist children to learn. Secondly, participants focused on learning strategies. The chapter also considers local perspectives on what makes a person a good teacher. Again participants emphasised personal and relational qualities over and above teaching strategies and skills. The chapter then includes a descriptive summary of observed teaching practices. This is followed by an attempt to empathically understand the multiple forces that shape how teachers go about their work and how students go about learning. In this section I argue that teaching practices are interlinked with assessment practices, curriculum, resourcing, infrastructure, and the wider social setting (i.e. beliefs, values, understandings, practices, material circumstances and social structures) and that each impacts on and shapes the others. The last section includes a detailed discussion of the significance of space and the location of students and teachers within the classroom.

In Chapter Four: Student-Teacher Interactions, I question previous research that: a) emphasises discontinuities between home and school; and b) describes school as an alien, colonial institution. Instead, I argue that relationships between teachers and students in primary classrooms are consistent with the *faaSamoa* - Samoan way. Using a case study, I identify common patterns in student-teacher relationships (e.g. students' unwillingness to approach teachers for assistance and/or ask questions). I then explore relevant student, parent, and teacher values, understandings, beliefs and practices (including socialisation patterns) that shape student-teacher interactions. I conclude that both home and school socialisation instil and affirm a deep awareness and sensitivity to hierarchical relations, downplay the child as an individual and encourage a sociocentric, communal orientation where group/family well-being is of prime importance. Finally, I point out that MESC's call for more child-centred pedagogies requires teachers and students to behave in ways that are not consistent with wider social values, beliefs, and cultural practices.

Chapter Five, Contested Discourse: Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child, looks at physical punishment within schools and the wider society. This chapter shows how tensions arise when global flows in the forms of ideologies, policies and practices are taken from one context (e.g. the Pacific Rim) and transferred into new contexts (i.e. Samoa). In Samoa, MESC policy explicitly outlaws physical punishment. However, MESC policy is at odds with the beliefs, values and understandings of many students, parents and teachers. This chapter looks at MESC's ban on physical discipline, the implications and people's responses to the ban. Using
interview material, I show that parents and many teachers see physical punishment as a necessary tool to instil respect, appropriate behaviour, obedience and social responsibility. Underlying these beliefs is yet another layer of beliefs and understandings about the nature of children and adults' responsibilities to children. From a Samoan perspective, responsible parents hide indulgent forms of love. Instead, the caring adult demonstrates love through advising, directing, instructing, and if necessary physically disciplining.

Chapter Six: Exams - Colonial Imposition or Cultural Fit, attempts to understand why exams are so entrenched in primary schools and why students, parents and many teachers support their continuation. The chapter begins with a review of the Year 8 National Examination and how it impacts on the nature and quality of teaching and learning. I also explore a number of factors (e.g. supervision problems, leaking, limitations of pencil-paper type tests, assessing students in a second language, etc.) that compromise the validity and fairness of the results. Using interview material I show that locals, for the most part, value and support the Year 8 exam and that the exam serves an important role in certification and allocation of scarce resources (i.e. places in prestigious secondary schools). Conversely, the Year 8 National Examination contributes to the maintenance of existing social inequalities. I then look at how there is an emphasis on testing and exams throughout primary school and suggest that tests and exams ‘fit’ with other aspects of primary education (e.g. limited resources, prescribed and narrow curriculum, teacher-centred pedagogy), and participant understandings about appropriate student-teacher interactions. Finally, I suggest that exams have a high level of cultural fit and appeal. From this perspective, exams are consistent with many Samoan beliefs, ways of viewing the world and cultural practices.

In the Conclusion, I revisit and develop ideas presented in earlier chapters. Firstly, I revisit the idea of education as an integrated system. I then look at the relationship between education in Samoa and its wider sociocultural and material setting and present several models to illustrate this dynamic relationship. I revisit and extend Appadurai’s (1996) idea of the modern world as a dynamic, interactive system, typified by flows of people, goods, ideas, images, etc. I look at how these processes have contributed to disjunctures or tensions between educational policy and practices. In particular, I show how MESC policies reflect Western ideologies about what constitutes ‘good’ teaching, how children learn and the nature of children. These ideologies closely align with Bernstein’s (1975; 1996) invisible pedagogy and are consistent with societies that emphasise the individual and individual rights. By contrast teaching
practice, student approaches to learning and student-teacher interactions in primary classrooms in Samoa closely align with Bernstein’s invisible pedagogy and Samoan values and ideologies. Samoan values and ideologies emphasise the importance of group and family well-being over and above the individual. At the end of the conclusion, I explore several ideas as to how these tensions might be resolved.
Chapter Two: Local Perspectives on Education and Student Achievement

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the values, beliefs and understandings that underlie learning in primary schools in Samoa. Using student, parent, and teacher interview material I explore local perspectives on the purpose of formal education, what children should learn at school, and what factors affect how well children achieve at school. The chapter develops the idea that teaching and learning occur in the va-space of the teacher-student relationship and that this relationship is profoundly influenced by the wider sociocultural setting.

The relationship between cultural values, beliefs and educational practice is increasingly recognised by Pacific educators (Helu Thaman 1991; Moli 1993; Helu Thaman 1994; Tavana 1994; Esera 1996; Helu Thaman 1996; Tupuola 2000; Nabobo 2002). Nabobo urges Pacific nations to investigate local “paradigms of thought and explore Pacific world views” and include them in formal education (ibid.: 45). Helu Thaman (1991) calls for cultural analysis that makes explicit key linguistic concepts, values, beliefs and practices, that can then form the basis of a culturally relevant curriculum. In this chapter, I am interested in cultural analysis that makes explicit the relationship between a cultural system (i.e. faaSamoa), educational values, beliefs and learning at the primary level in Samoa.

Pacific researchers often describe formal education as a colonial remnant that is inconsistent with Pacific culture (Helu Thaman 1991; Tavana 1994; Helu Thaman 1996; Tavana 1997; Nabobo 1998; Afamasaga 1999; Afamasaga 2002; Helu Thaman 2002). This sentiment is expressed strongly by Afamasaga (2002: 97) who writes, “Schooling in Samoa (and in the Pacific) is a totally foreign import, and this is an alienating force, threatening to transform our society beyond recognition.” Likewise Tavana (1994: 139) argues that “Samoan eduction still reflects the powerful influence of European and American colonialism with its primary focus on ‘individual students’ and ‘individual performance’.” In this chapter, I try to unsettle the assumption that formal education in Samoa is largely an alien Western institution. Analysis of interview material and classroom observations suggests that, whilst the structure and
organisation of formal schooling\textsuperscript{52} are Western in their origin, much of what actually happens within primary schools is profoundly influenced by \textit{faaSamoan} - the Samoan way. Using interview material to present local perspectives, and based on classroom observations, I suggest that there is a high level of consistency between pedagogical practice (teaching and learning processes) and core cultural values, beliefs, aspirations, attitudes and understandings. These ideas are developed further in subsequent chapters.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section looks at participants’ perspectives on the purpose of education. This section includes a detailed discussion of the concepts \textit{poto} and \textit{atama}. The second section looks at what parents and teachers want children to learn at school. This section identifies academic and social/moral outcomes. Participants also recognised that some children did well at school whilst others did not. The third section explores local beliefs as to why children are different in their abilities and achievement. The final section considers other factors that affect children’s progress at school.

The multiple purposes of education

Students, parents and teachers placed huge value on education.

\textit{O le mea sili ona taula ia te au (pause), aua i lo’u faatauaina le aoga, ou te lē manao i ma faana e ola ifo ae valelea. Ou te lē manao foi i la’u faana e faalulu le ilumanai.}\textsuperscript{53} \textit{O le isi mea i lo’u mafaufau e lē mafuta pe'a maua ma le faanu. Pe a uma atu maua ola ae ia e lelei latou aoaoga, e maua le galaega lelei. Faapea la (pause), e ola ai latou ma fiafa ai. Ou te lē manao foi (pause). O le mea foi ua taula ia te au, e o mai tamaiti i le aoga. Ou te lē manao e vaai atu la e feoai solo. O le isi mea ou te lē manao ai i lo latou tuputupu a’e ao laiti. Ou te lē lava vaai, ae pologa a’e, o laiti mai. E o e foi feua, amo mai popo ma mea uma faapena. O le isi foi mea ou te faatauaina ai le aoga, e o atu i le mea e o i ai, ae iloa lautala i le gagana. Faaoga gagana e lua.} (The most important thing to me (pause) about why school is important, is that I don’t want my children to grow up and be foolish/stupid. I don’t want my children to leave the future to chance. The other thing in my mind is that we are not always going to be here with our children. When we die, if they have done well at school, they will find good work. In that way (pause), they can live and be happy. I also don’t want (pause). The other

\textsuperscript{52} For example, the division of knowledge/learning into specific subject areas, learning in a defined space (ie. a classroom within a school compound), defined time frames and specialised teachers all reflect the Western origins of education.

\textsuperscript{53} In this interview the parent took the word \textit{lulu} - raffle/lottery and added the prefix \textit{faa} – “to cause, make, be like” (Allardice 1985: 16) to create a new word meaning to leave to chance.

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reason why it’s important that my children attend school, I don’t want to see them roaming about. The other thing is, I don’t want them to grow up (implied meaning - take responsibility) while they’re still young. I have no desire to see them slaving away while they’re still young. Doing jobs, carrying coconuts on their shoulders and things like that. The other reason I place importance on school is that when they go somewhere, they know how to speak properly. Use two languages (implied meaning - Samoan and English) - RP4).

This extract touches on several key ideas that were repeatedly raised by participants. Firstly, the rural parent focuses on the pragmatic function of school as a means to ensure material and social well-being. Not mentioned in this excerpt, but closely related, is the idea that success at school enables a person to fulfil important social responsibilities. Secondly, the parent sees school as a place where children become poto. For the parent, poto has multiple dimensions. On the one hand it has an academic focus. The child will master two languages. Simultaneously, it has a moral focus. The child will not be valea - stupid/foolish and feoai solo - roam about. Finally, the parent hints at contradictions in educational success. Schooling might enable the individual to meet social obligations but it also enables one to be free of onerous responsibilities. These ideas are explored in this section.

Participants frequently contrasted life in New Zealand with life in Samoa. New Zealand was perceived as a land of relative plenty, personal freedom and well paid employment. By contrast, Samoa was described as a poor, developing country with limited opportunities, few paid jobs and low salaries. Participants frequently depicted village life as onerous in its social, financial and physical demands. As expressed by an urban parent, “Ou te talanoa i la ‘u fanau ma fai atu i ai, ‘Vaai outou. O le olaga, e le o se mea faigofie. Ou te le manaou tou te valea. Ae o e toaaga i le aoga. O iina tou te popoto ai ma outou fiafia ai. ’” (I talk to my children and tell them, ‘Look. Life is not an easy thing. I don’t want you to be stupid/foolish. But, go and work hard at school. There [at school] you will become clever and find happiness’ - UP4.)

Over half of those interviewed stated that attending and doing well at school were essential to ensure a lumanai manuia - successful future. Participants associated a range of outcomes with a lumanai manuia. Firstly, parents hoped that through schooling their children would one day

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54 The terms, tafaio vale - be idle/roam about, feoai solo - roam about/go back and forth, and taa - roam or gad about, were all perceived as undesirable behaviours that implied a lack of maturity and social responsibility.
become financially self-sufficient and be able to support not only themselves, but also their spouse and offspring. Several parents stated that one day they would not be there to look after their children. School was a means “la maua se saolotoga ma mea e mananao i ai. Ia maua se humanai e ola lelei. Ia maua se galuega e tautai ai latou” (To find freedom and things [they] want. To have future where they live well. To find work to look after themselves - UP4). Significant in this parent’s response is the idea that paid work would enable their offspring to have greater personal agency in their lives. This idea was reiterated by rural and urban parents. Through obtaining paid employment one was less likely to be pologa - slaving away, at heavy agricultural work and/or at the beck and call of others. Teachers in secondary schools in Savaii commented that some parents pushed their children to return to school and repeatedly resit their upper secondary school exams (i.e. School Certificate and Pacific Secondary School Certificate). Resitting the exam was seen as a preferable option to leaving school and becoming part of the village aumaga - group of untitled males or aualuma - young women and wives of untitled men and at the beck and call of village leaders (personal communication - Edex2).

Paid employment in Apia also provided an opportunity to experience town life and some degree of autonomy from family and village responsibilities. In many villages, the fono - traditional council of matai - chiefs retains strong control over day-to-day village life. Councils have the power to issue village-wide edicts about what is permissible and what is not. Village curfews are common and some villages have rules as to what can or cannot be worn, whether beards are allowed, etc. If there is a village project, councils have the power to direct all taulelea - untitled men and youth to attend and help. For many young people, Apia represents freedom from immediate family, extended family and village rules and demands. Despite MESC and government efforts to promote agriculture and rural lifestyles, no student or parent talked about subsistence farming as a desired option. Plantation work, supplemented by fishing and selling surplus staple crops and coconuts were described as alternatives when children failed to achieve academically. Likewise Tavana (1994) and Fuatai (1993) found that education in Samoa was valued as a means to escape rural life and find white collar and well paid employment.

55 In reality, each family circumstance differs. Some families (both nuclear and extended) allow individual voice and are careful with the demands they place on family members. Other family groups are more autocratic. Likewise there are significant differences between villages, some allowing greater personal freedom than others.
Whilst not explicitly discussed in interviews, education was clearly valued as a direct and indirect means of enhancing individual and family status. Students were ranked according to exam results, their results publicly displayed, and their position in class announced at prize-giving ceremonies. This, combined with competitive entry into selected secondary schools, encouraged inter-family and community interest in student success. Participants talked with pride about immediate or extended family and village members who gained entry into prestigious secondary schools, Samoa Polytechnic, the National University of Samoa, or scholarships to study abroad. Walls were frequently adorned with framed exam results, certificates and sometimes photos of a graduating family member.

Success in upper secondary or tertiary level education and white collar, well paid employment shifted status relationships within the family. An academic family member or good wage earner was often freed from heavy and/or dirty household and/or plantation chores (i.e. chores assigned to lower status family members). Educational success also enhanced family status through increased ability to acquire and accumulate personal property and contribute to culturally valued activities. Access to cash dramatically increased one's capacity to give to faalavelave - important events,56 church and other relationship building activities, and thus enhance individual and family status (Macpherson 1988; O’Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). Indeed Macpherson’s (1988) observation that increased productivity is not so much valued for its own sake but rather for its capacity to enhance status is equally relevant to education.

Parents saw financial self-sufficiency as of utmost importance. Both rural and urban parents expressed the idea that without financial means their offspring might be forced to depend on others or, worse still, steal. By having good employment one would “Maua foi mea la e manaomia mo le olaga. Aua ne ‘i soli se tulafono. Aua, a manao i se mea ae e leai se tupe - o le a gaoi” (Have the things they need for life. Do not break the law. Because, if they want something but have no money - they will steal - UP2).

56 The term faalavelave literally means to become entangled. Faalavelave is used in everyday speech to refer to an accident, something that is a bother or hindrance and events of cultural significance that disrupt and enrich everyday life. Faalavelave include, church openings, funerals, weddings, title bestowals, and court cases over customary land and titles.
By far the most frequent response from students, parents and teachers was the idea that education enabled students to find paid employment and look after their parents. Reference was also made to finding work to look after the aiga potopoto - extended family, contribute to the lotu - church, nuu - village activities and faalavelave - important events. Success at school and paid employment enabled a person to participate in reciprocal relationship-building activities, meet cultural obligations and be a ‘good’ Samoan.

E ala ona o i le aoga o le fia maua le poto. A manuia le aoga e maua foi ni lima fesoasoani mo le tagata la e fai galuaga e help i le totogi o pili ma le tautiga o matua. Ae mai o o Niu Sila. (The reason for going to school is the desire to become clever/smart/intelligent/wise. If the schooling is successful you have more hands to help the person who is working to pay the bills and look after parents. Especially parents. It’s not like New Zealand - Rstul.)

O Samoa e unai lava e matua tamaiti, e naunau e o i le aoga. E le pei o fafo. Ua ola faapalagi. Ua pule le tamaitititi ia. Ua ala a. Ua ese le life ua ola ai. ... Ae peita i nei i Samoa, e naunau lava matua e a he tamaiti i le aoga. Ua faapea foi, ua tigaina e faikutega e sue le tupe. E naunau e fai ai le aoga. Pei o le ala ea e ala ai ona unai e matua e o i le aoga. ... Ia maua le poto ina ia maua le galuaga e tauti ai matua. (In Samoa parents urge their children, they desire them to go to school. It’s not like overseas. [They] live a Western lifestyle. The child can do what they like. They go [implied meaning - do as they please]. Their life is different. ... But in Samoa parents endeavour to send their children to school. It’s like/They think, they have worked to find the money. [Because] they desire an education [for their children]. That’s the reason parents push [their children] to get an education. ... To become clever so they can get a job and look after their parents - UP4.)

O’Meara (1990) in his study of a village economy emphasises the link between waged income and family well-being. He found that adults valued education as a means to find employment and a regular source of income. O’Meara suggests that a large family could be seen as a divergent financial strategy that increases the likelihood of economic security. Ideally, some of the children succeed at school and go on to earn a good income whilst others fish, work family land, and participate in other home or village-based activities. Afamasaga (2002) provides another interesting perspective. Pointing to the huge national revenue generated by remittances from family members overseas and the importance of these remittances in people’s lives, she suggests that education in Samoa has an important role in preparing people as an ‘export commodity’. Indeed, both rural and town parents talked about the importance of remittances from family members. Participants referred to getting money from overseas relatives to look after elderly parents, assist with faalavelave - important events, look after
sick family members, build or repair homes, buy items for White Sunday, pay school fees, phone, electricity and water bills and international travel. One rural mother believed that it was best for her academically able children to stay in Samoa and find work there. However, she and her husband were already making plans to send an academically weak daughter to New Zealand. There she would have a lumanai - future and be able to help the family back home in Samoa.

Students and adults alike saw sending children to school as an important but demanding sacrifice that loving and responsible parents willingly made. Children reciprocate parents' sacrifice by working hard at school and doing well. Ultimately children reciprocate parents' sacrifice by finding employment and supporting their parents. Not only did parents make frequent reference to school-related expenses, but some noted a subtle cost in the form of lost labour. In Samoa, many rural and urban children contribute in significant ways to family tasks. Interviewed Year 7 female students (approximately 11-13 years of age) referred to looking after younger siblings, picking up the rubbish, weeding, washing, hanging, collecting, folding and ironing clothes, doing dishes and errands. Male rural students talked about cutting the grass with a bush knife, collecting and carrying firewood, food from the plantation, coconuts and helping with food preparation. When children attend school, adult workloads in many households dramatically increase. Indeed, teachers believed that some children attended school to escape family chores rather than to learn. Students, parents, and teachers were also keenly aware that some students took time off or left school because parents needed them to mind younger siblings, look after a sick family member, cook, do chores, work in the plantation and/or sell produce. Local papers regularly commented on children not attending school and selling handicrafts, food and other products in the streets and/or market place in Apia.

A number of fascinating contradictions emerged from the interview material about the importance of schooling. Firstly, participants saw education as enhancing a person's ability to participate in culturally valued practices. Simultaneously, adult participants recognised a dark

57 All senior citizens are entitled to receive $S100 a month (approx. $NZ68). Salaried wage earners contribute 5% of their income to the National Provident Fund (NPF). The government matches this. On retirement NPF participants draw a small regular payment. Given the limited sources of income, aging parents depend heavily on their children. The importance of looking after your parents is instilled in children from an early age. As
and dangerous side of education that potentially undermined core cultural values and practices. Success at school led to well paid employment and dramatically increased a person's ability to meet a range of important cultural obligations. With a good income a person could support parents and extended family members. A good income also increased one's ability to contribute to church collections and faalavelave - important cultural events (eg. funerals, church openings, title bestowals, fund-raising activities) and in so doing strengthen local economies and enhance individual and family status. Thus O'Meara (1990) found that Apia and overseas-based residents made significant cash and other contributions to village based families and faalavelave and that these contributions fed into and helped sustain village economies, ways of life and valued traditional practices.

Supporting parents and extended family, and participation in faalavelave also establish new and reaffirm old relationships, and firmly entrench oneself and one's family in a network of reciprocal relationships. From this perspective, educational success not only enhances one's ability to participate in valued cultural practices, achieve socially valued goals, but also has the potential to strengthen social cohesiveness. However, participants also desired education as a means to financial independence, social distance and self-sufficiency. If children did well at school they would "e iloa tausi latou. Aua le' lealagolago i isi tagata" (... know how to look after themselves. Don’t depend on other people - RP5). Well paid employment in Apia or overseas made possible the purchase of freehold land. Freehold land meant no longer having to live in the village, meet on a day-to-day basis family demands, and comply with village committee and council edicts.\(^58\) Furthermore it meant freedom from the surveilling eye of extended family and village members.\(^59\) It also meant no longer having to reside with Apia-based relatives, contribute to their household and depend on others. Well paid employment made possible greater personal agency in how one lived one's life.

Parents recognised that education had hidden dangers. When parents made sacrifices to educate their children, they could not be absolutely sure that their time and effort were not in discussed later in this chapter, all participants believed that by looking after their parents, they and their children would be blessed.

\(^{58}\) Women's Committees remain important throughout rural Samoa. Women's Committees provide a forum for woman to meet and discuss village issues, promote health and other projects. The committees carry out regular inspections of households, instruct members to purchase certain household items each month and levy fines (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). Matai - titled men attend village fono - council meetings, where village matters are discussed, community projects administered, village rules set, and fines levied.

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vain. Rural parents felt a mixture of pride and anxiety when their children gained sufficient marks in the Year 8 National Examination to enter a secondary school in the capital, Apia. Far from the surveilling eyes of parents, extended family and village, parents feared that their children might *taa* - roam about, meet boys, be influenced by *mea leaga* - bad things (e.g. cigarettes, marijuana, videos, movies) and *faapalagi* - Western values. If their children emerged through secondary school, found well paid employment in Apia or overseas, would they still visit and support their parents, contribute to *faalavelave* and value the *faaSamoa*?

Underlying parents’ anxiety and the potential for education to enhance or undermine social cohesion is a pervasive ambivalence towards aspects of the culture (Shore 1982; Gerber 1985; Kruse Va’ai 1998; Mageo 1998; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Edwards et al. (2004) when interviewing young Samoans in New Zealand found that participants expressed a strong ambivalence towards *faalavelave*, yet felt compelled to contribute. Likewise Gerber (1985) found that Samoans did not necessarily see love as a pleasurable emotion and giving as a pleasurable act. Rather, love and generosity were frequently associated with feelings of obligation and sometimes indifference. Consistent with comments made in this study, Gerber found that people used words varying from *alofa* - love, *onosai* - patience, *fiu* - to be tired of, to *musu* - unwilling, to describe feelings associated with meeting family demands. Indeed, the various meanings associated with the word *faalavelave* are suggestive of the inherent contradictions in so much of *faaSamoa*. *Faalavelave* implies to become entangled, suggesting that in the act of giving one becomes increasingly enmeshed in a web of reciprocal relationships. As such, *faalavelave* are important social events that confirm and strengthen existing relationships, establish new bonds and increase social cohesion. At the same time the word *faalavelave* implies something that is a bother, disrupts day-to-day life and causes inconvenience.

In summary, a good education and the ability to earn a reasonable income simultaneously enhance a person’s ability to participate in valued cultural practices or escape its clutches. Similarly a successful education, leading to good employment could either strengthen or undermine social cohesiveness. Clearly the challenge for parents and teachers is to ensure that students emerge from school with a strong commitment to core cultural values. The solution

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59 Shore (1982) documents the power of public scrutiny in controlling how people live their lives in rural Samoa.
to the possible contradiction in education is perhaps to be found in the concepts poto and atamai. Reflective of their importance, these concepts emerge as recurrent themes throughout the chapter.

Poto and atamai

In response to the question, 'What is the purpose of going to school?' students, parents and teachers repeatedly stated that children went to school to become poto. Less frequently mentioned was the idea of becoming atamai. Many used the terms interchangeably and when asked, 17 stated that there was no difference in meaning, three said that they were almost the same and only three strongly felt that there were significant differences. Several suggested that the meaning varied with context, and pointed to differences in school and church/biblical use. More common was the idea that poto and atamai behaviours, embodied in a child or adult, could be found in a range of contexts.

Pratt (1912: 36) defines atamai as "the mind", "clever, intelligent, sensible", and "to understand as a child, to be clever". He defines poto as a "hard-working", "wise", "to be wise", and "wisdom" (ibid: 255). Allardice (1985: 12) gives the meanings "clever, intelligent, wise, wisdom" for atamai and "clever, smart, intelligent, skilled, expert, learned, wise, wisdom, wise man" for poto. Significantly, Pratt’s definition of poto makes no reference to intelligence, cleverness or smartness, qualities associated with poto by Allardice and participants in this research. This suggests that, as noted by Helu Thaman in Tonga (Helu Thaman 1988), with the introduction of formal education in the Pacific the word poto has taken on new meanings.

Participants’ use of the concepts fell into two broad categories. Sometimes participants used poto and/or atamai to refer to academic, intellectual and/or practical qualities or abilities and sometimes participants used the two words to refer to moral qualities. Significantly, becoming poto was generally not seen as an end in itself. As indicated by the excerpts below, becoming poto enabled a person to find work and met a range of social obligations.

O le mea ua taua ai le aoga ia te a’u (pause), aua ou te maua ai le poto. O le poto lena e oo ina matua tfo e maua ai se galuega, aua le humanai. (The reason why

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60 In the Samoan Bible, wisdom is translated as poto. In the New Testament, Matthew 10:15, the snake is described as atamai in the sense of sharp witted and alert to everything around it.
school is important to me [pause], because I will acquire poto. When older, that cleverness [will enable me] to work, for the future - Rst5.)

E sau i le aoga e sue atu le poto ma le atamai. E sue se galuaga e tausi o 'u matua.
(I come to school to seek the poto and the atamai [to find cleverness/wisdom/intelligence]. To seek work to look after my parents - Rst6.)

Academic and intellectual qualities and/or behaviours: aspects of being poto and/or atamai

Pratt’s and Allardice’s definitions of atamai and Allardice’s definition of poto all refer to cleverness and intelligence. When participants were asked how they might identify a child who was poto or atamai, 24 of 28 made references to behaviours and dispositions that indicated cleverness, intelligence and/or the ability to use their mind. Participant responses fell into six broad groups. Five suggested that the poto child had the ability to quickly grasp something and understand. Most simply stated “E vave le pue.” ([They are] quick to catch on - RP5). “O le vave ona pueina mea” - ([They] are quick to catch on to things - UT1). “Soo se mea lava e vave ona pue i lona mafauau.” (Anything at all she is quick to catch in her mind - UP4). Three suggested that the poto/atamai child had the ability to hold something in his mind. “Ma le taoi i lona mafauau. La e tumau. E le ave ese mai lona mafauau” (Also he/she can hold it in his/her mind. It stays. It doesn’t go out of his/her mind - UP2).

Five adults talked about the poto/atamai child’s mind being matala - open and or ala - awake.
“E ese le matala o le mafauau. Ona ou faapea, ‘E ese le matala o le faiai o le tamaititi lea.’ Ua vave le tauntala, toe vave le faamiga.” (The mind is exceptionally open. So I would think. ‘This child’s mind is so open’. They are quick to talk and quick to understand [the meanings of words] - RP4.) For one rural teacher the bright child was easy to teach because “E ala lona mafauau ma le faiai.” (The child’s mind and brain is awake - RT3.)

Six adults and one student believed that the quality of small children’s speech and their ability to comprehend language indicated how poto/atamai they were. When describing a clever child an urban teacher stated, “O le isi ituiga poto, e lelei lona tauntala. E tauntala i taimi uma. ... E ese le atamai o lona leo. E le gata i lona tauntala i le aoga, ae faapena i le aiga.” (The other kind of poto is that he/she talks well. Talks all the time. ... He/She speaks so intelligently/has such a clever voice. Not only his/her speech at school but also his/her speech at home - UT4.) Several parents talked about knowing that one of their preschool children was poto because they quickly understood what was said to them and rapidly acquired spoken
language. Several referred to competency in English and Samoan as signs of being *poto* and/or *atamai*.

Reflecting the ability of language to take on new meanings with changed circumstances and contexts, students, parents and teachers gave several specifically school-related meanings to the concepts *poto* and/or *atamai*. Seven respondents stated that you knew a child was *poto/atamai* by the place they gained in class.61 “Afai suega, e lau mai e sili aoao.” (When there are exams, and the results are read out [they] are top - Rst1.) “Afai o le tamaititi e poto tele, ia (pause), o lona ia tulaga e sili.” (If the child is really clever, then [pause], his/her place will be top - RP6.) However, several responses suggested another layer of meaning. Top in class did not imply just intellectual ability. Rather good results indicated that a child was *toaga* - conscientious and had the moral attributes of a *poto* person.

Students and adults also referred to school-related abilities that showed children were *poto* and/or *atamai*. This included being quick to answer a teacher’s questions and give correct responses. Speaking in reference to the two top students in his class a rural Year 7 boy said:

_A fai atu tali, e ese ia. E vave le Iglisi. E vave le aumai. Ia, e sa’o uma la tali. Sa’o laua mea ua tusi. O matou (laughs) e sese. O le toa lua na, e le uma mai le festili a le faiaga, ua leva ona i luga o la lima. E sa’o uma la tali. (When it comes to answering questions, it’s amazing. Their English is quick [implied meaning - good]. They are quick to reply. All their answers are correct. The things they write down are correct. Us [laughs], we get it wrong. Those two have their hands up before the teacher has finished asking the question. Their answers are always right - Rst6.)_

61 Lee Hang claims that success in exams has become the “only measure of a child’s intelligence.” (Lee-Hang 2003: 41). Student, parent and teacher responses in this study show that locals have diverse ways of measuring intelligence. However, it could be argued that success in exams is the only measure that counts when it comes to children moving through the school system. Hence the great emphasis students, parents and teachers place on exams at the primary and secondary level.

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During class observations, teachers made frequent reference to a child being *poto* and/or *atamai* because their bookwork was neat, carefully set out and correct. The tendency to associate neatness with the concepts of *poto* and/or *atamai* was also evident in interviews. In reference to an academically able classmate, a rural student stated:

> E ala ona iloa ai (that she’s clever) (pause), e iloa mai i lana tautala ma lana galuega e fai i totonu o lana api. Pei e neat. E lelei lana api. Toe manaia, toe sa ‘o (pause), e leai se mea e sese. (The way you know [that she’s clever] [pause], you can tell from what she says/how she speaks and the work she does in her book. Like it’s neat. Her books are good/pleasing. Also attractive, also correct [pause], nothing is wrong - Rst1.)

The link in students’ and teachers’ minds between tidyness in presentation, careful setting out, and completing all required work in exercise books is consistent with Pratt’s (1912) definition of *poto* as hardworking and participant’s association of the concepts *poto* and *atamai* with *toaga* - conscientious. On a more subtle level, it also hints at the idea that if one carefully goes through the steps of something, (i.e. in the act of doing something) one might acquire the state of being *poto* and/or *atamai*.

On a visit to a friend’s home, the grandmother was eager to show how *poto* - clever her granddaughter was. Just on five years of age, Tia had completed five months of formal schooling. At grandmother’s bidding Tia produced an exercise book with her ‘school work’. In this book, Tia had painstakingly copied words in English from an older family member’s textbook. Her printing was evenly spaced, letters correctly formed and remarkably regular in shape and size. The grandmother then commanded, “Sipela girl” (Spell girl). Without a moment’s hesitation, Tia chanted, “Girl, g - i - r - l, girl!” This performance was repeated with a range of words of four to seven letters. Next, a familiar storybook (reading age approximately 7.5-8 years) was produced. This Tia proceeded to read in a sing/song voice, at reasonable speed. On several occasions she stumbled and attempted to phonetically sound out an unfamiliar word. Once she asked for the meaning of a word.

What is of interest here is not so much that, as stated by her grandmother, “*E ese le poto o Tia*” (Tia is so *poto* - clever), but rather what constituted Tia’s cleverness in Grandmother’s

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This idea is explored in more depth in the Chapter Three.
eyes. Consistent with interview responses and teacher comments in the classroom, Grandmother saw the ability to produce neat, tidy, systematic ‘work’ as evidence of being *poto*. Secondly, for Grandmother, Tia’s cleverness/intellectual ability was evident in her ability to recall or memorise difficult spelling words and read aloud in a second language. At no time was there any interest in or comment about whether Tia understood what she had read or written. Furthermore, Tia’s reading, like that observed by Johnstone (1994) with Samoan preschoolers in New Zealand, had all the elements of a performance. She started and stopped when commanded, ‘performed’ out loud for the audience, but showed little interest in the meaning of what she had read. Nor did her audience concern themselves with meaning. Tia’s *poto* - cleverness/intelligence was evident in her ability to recall, produce and perform.

Many adult respondents linked *poto* and/or *atamai* dispositions with the verb *iloa* - to know. In some instances, *iloa* was used in the sense of having knowledge. In other instances it implied having skill or expertise in some area. Speaking about her work, a teacher expressed this notion in the following way:

*A maua le poto, e te iloa. O le atamai e tai tutusa ma le iloa. E te iloa fai se mea. A maua e oe le poto, ona e maua loa lea o le atamai. E te faatinoiga ai le faiga a le faiaoga. A maua le poto, ua maua le atamai e faatinoiga ai lau galuega e aoao tamaiti. Pei o le mealofo mai le Atua i tagata. (If you are poto, you know. Atamai is almost the same as knowing. You know how to do something. If you are poto that means are you also atamai. You are able to carry out the job of being a teacher. If you are poto, you have the atamai to carry out your work to teach children. It is like a gift from God to man - RT2.)*

*iloa* was also associated with *poto* and *atamai* dispositions and behaviours in the sense of knowing how to behave in socially approved ways. When describing a *poto/atamai* child, a rural student stated, “*Ua iloa ava, ua iloa nofo i lalo, ua iloa le faiaoga.*” (They know respect, know about sitting down [referring to the cultural expectation that people of lower status will not stand in front of adults when addressing them], they know the teacher [implying that they know to behave appropriately towards teachers] - Rst5.)

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63 The official starting age is five years. School rolls showed that there was considerable variation as to when children started school. In this instance, a family member had connections with the school and with the support of a glowing preschool report succeeded in enrolling Tia well before her fifth birthday.

64 The use of *iloa* - to know, here deserves special mention. All groups of participants stated that children should, ‘*E iloa le faiaoga.*’ Literally, this means, ‘Children should know the teacher.’ Whereas knowing a person in the Western sense implies becoming familiar and/or close, for the Samoan child to *iloa le faiaoga* - know the
Several participants linked *poto* with being educated and therefore wise. According to an urban parent, “Aua lē ola vaivai. Aua lē ola valea. Ia ola aoaoina. E maua le atamai. E iloa faasoasoa. E iloa faautauta.” (Don’t live a weak/poor life. Don’t live a dumb/foolish/unintelligent life. Live an educated life. Acquire wisdom/cleverness/intelligence. Know how to budget/use what you have wisely. Know how to consider carefully/take care - UP2.) However, far more frequently expressed was the idea that through education and becoming *poto* and/or *atamai*, students would come to know the difference between what was right and what was wrong.

**Socially valued dispositions and behaviours: aspects of being poto and/or atamai**

Students, parents and teachers strongly believed that children went to school to become *poto/atamai* in the sense of acquire appropriate attitudes, dispositions and behaviours. This parallels Helu Thaman’s finding in Tonga (Helu Thaman 1988; 1992) that teachers saw the purpose of education as primarily social and moral. In this study, participants believed that if children did not go to school, they might grow up and *taa* - roam about. “Nao o le taa. E le fesoasoani i matua” (Only roam about. [They] won’t help [their] parents - R5). Several parents expressed fear that without an education, children might one day *gaoi* - steal. This belief appeared to have several origins. Parents believed that if children left school with no qualification and had inadequate means to meet their needs, they might be forced to steal. Other responses suggested that education in itself created a more moral person. “Tauta ia maua le poto ma le malamalama. Maue foi le ustai i matua” ([School] is important in order to become *poto* and gain understanding. Also become obedient to parents - RP2). This position was explicitly stated by a Year 6 urban teacher, who told her students that they came to school to become *poto* and that being *poto* resulted in good behaviour, obedience, willingness to help, love, honesty and good work. Students, parents and teachers also described moral qualities as precursors to academic success, rather than outcomes of school. The child who displayed socially valued behaviours would do well at school and become *poto*.

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63 teacher, implies a relationship of formality and social distance. In such a relationship the child recognises the va-space/relationship and shows appropriate levels of respect towards the adult.  
65 It is important to note that there are no formal social welfare ‘safety nets’ like unemployment or sickness benefits in Samoa. The extended family acts as an informal social support. 
66 The full exchange between the teacher and her class is given in Chapter Five.
All participants believed that children went to school to become *poto* and/or *atamai* in the sense of acquiring appropriate behaviour and attitudes. For the most part Pratt’s (1912) and Allardice’s (1985) definitions closely align with teacher and parent understandings of *poto* and *atamai*. Five adults suggested that *poto* and/or *atamai* children were *faautauta* - considered/cautious/careful/prudent and attentive to who and what were occurring in their vicinity. Several also used *faautauta* to suggest wisdom and common sense. When explaining the concept *atamai*, a rural teacher used the biblical analogy of a snake, poised, alert and measured in its response.\(^{67}\)

\[O \text{ le } upe \text{ o le atamai e sau mai } le \text{ faaupuga lea; ‘E atamai pei o le } gata. \text{ ‘Manatua o le gata, o se } \text{ manu } \text{ filemu. E filemu. E moe } \text{ e fierce, ae la e } \text{ filemu. O lona uiga, e atamai le } \text{ gata. E filemu, ae la e (pause), na te } \text{ iloa uma a garioina la e fa } \text{ e tagata mo ia. A’o le } \text{ i alu au lona } \text{ fili, ua leva ona sauni mai le gata. O lona uiga, e filemu, ae na te } \text{ iloa mea uma e tatau ona fa. E faapena la le tagata atamai. E filemu. E faalegaoa, aua la e iloa (inaudible ...).} \]

(The word atamai comes from the saying, “To be intelligent/clever/wise like the snake.” Remember the snake is a quiet/calm animal. True it is fierce, but is is quiet/calm. This means, the snake is clever/intelligent/wise. It’s quiet/calm, but it knows/sees all the movements people make towards it. Before its enemy approaches, the snake has long been prepared. This means, it’s quiet/calm, but it knows what it should do. People who are *atamai* - clever/intelligent/wise are like that. They are quiet. They are not restless/active, because they know [inaudible...].\(^{67}\))

Consistent with the idea of *faautauta* - considered/cautious/careful/prudent, 24 of 28 respondents associated *poto/atamai* with appropriate behaviour and appropriate speech. The child who was not *poto/atamai*, did not think about their actions and possible consequences. According to an urban parent “E tele isi tamaiti e le faaaoga latou atamai. E ee i luga. E le o se poto le mea na. O le le mafaufau” (Lots of children don’t use their atamai/mind/intelligence/wisdom. They shout loudly. That’s not a *poto* - clever/ intelligent thing to do. That is thoughtless - UP1). By contrast, the *poto/atamai* child displayed socially desired and approved behaviours.

\[E \text{ foliga fiafia ia. E } \text{ tooga. E le } \text{ faatonu e se } \text{ faiaoga. E os o ia. E vave i mea uma. E oo i mea uma. O lona } \text{ tino. O lona lavalava. O lona } \text{ tautala. O lona garioina.} \]

... \[E \text{ iloa tautala. E iloa le va faaloai. Pei o le itu lena, e tasi lena vaega. (pause) E lelei foi lona mafaufau. E faautautaina i soo se faatomuga e fa. E oo foi i le itu}

\(^{67}\) Refer to Matthew 10:15.

\(^{68}\) I suggest that there is also a link between participants’ descriptions of an *atamai/poto* person as *filemu* - quiet/calm and the cultural pattern that high status people move in an unhurried, unflustered way, and engage in minimal activity (Ochs 1988).
They always look happy. [Speaker here is referring to cultural expectation that children/teenagers show a willing/happy disposition when they serve visitors and/or carry out instructions]. They are conscientious. The teacher does not have to tell them what to do. They just do it. They are quick to do everything [implied meaning - quick to carry out assigned tasks]. In all areas. Their appearance. Their clothes. The way they speak. Their movements. ... They know how to speak properly. They understand how to go about relating in a respectful way. That’s the side, one side. [Pause] They have a good mind. They are trustworthy in whatever they are told to do. Even with things in the family. The family. That side/those things, nowadays you hardly ever get a child with that nature. No child has everything/all the qualities. That’s my understanding of poto - UT5.)

Frequent references were made to a poto child knowing and displaying faaaloalo ava - respectful behaviours. This included children knowing how to tautala lelei - speak properly/with respect and tautala faaaloalo - speak in a respectful manner/use respect language.

O le tamaititi e poto lelei, e iloa i lana tautala ma lana tu ma lana aga. E faailoa i lona faaaloalo i tagata matua i lona aiga ma isi tagata fou mai foi. E tautala faaaloalo. (A child who is really poto, you know from how they talk and their manner/way and their conduct/behaviour. It shows in the way they respect older people in the family and other people [strangers] too. They speak with respect/using respectful language - Rst1).

Poto children were also described as having a filemu - quiet/gentle/calm disposition. They were not tautalaititi - cheeky. “E le taitai tautalaititi. E le fia fusu i isi tamaiti.” (They are never cheeky. They don’t want to fight/cause trouble with other children - Ust5). “E le tautala soo i totonu o le aoga. ... E le taalo.” (They don’t talk all the time at school. ... They don’t play - Ust2). Poto/atama children were also perceived as usitai - obedient, and eager to please. By contrast the vaivai - weak child is disobedient and unwilling.

E iloagofie tamaiti popoto. E usitai i faatonuga o ona matua pe a fai atu. Faigofie tamaiti popoto. E fiafia i ona matua pe a fai atu. Ae o tamaiti vaivai, a fai atu faatonuga, ae tatu vae. O le faiga na a Samoa. A fai atu matua e alu e fai mai lea mea ma lea mea, ae tomumu ma alu. O mea na a tamaiti tomumu, e le maua se mea. (It’s easy to know popoto children. They obey their parents’ instructions when they are told. Popoto children are easy. They are happy about what their parents tell them to do. But academically weak/struggling children, when they are given an instruction, they stamp their feet [indicating unwillingness], grumble, then go. That’s what happens in Samoa. The thing about the child who grumbles/complains is that they will get nowhere/nothing [in life] - Rst6.)

Teachers believed strongly that the child who was poto at school also behaved in poto ways at home. Indeed, several teachers stated that top students were “E pito sili ona fai feau i latou
The poto child was perceived as obedient, obliging, and respectful to the teacher, his/her parents and elders at home. Furthermore, he or she is toaga - conscientious in both contexts.

One rural parent explained that she might find out that her child is poto when she went to the school prize giving and learnt that she had done well. Alternatively, she could tell her child is poto by observing her behaviour in the family. "Poto i totonu aiga. I le usitai. O le faaaloalo. O mea uma na, e te iloa ai le tamaititi e poto." (Poto within our family. In obedience. Respect. All those things, you can tell the child is poto - RP2.)

Significantly, several teachers and parents suggested that if a child stayed home and did not attend school, they would not become poto. Not only would they fail to attain the academic abilities associated with school learning but they would also lack a sense of social responsibility within the family context. Such a child would "Nao o le taa. E le fesoasoani i matua" (Only roam about [taa has negative connotation - implying lack of social responsibility]. [They] would not help their parents - RT5).

Students, parents and teachers made frequent links between the concepts poto, atamai and toaga - diligent/hard-working/conscientious behaviour. Participants believed that it was easy to know the poto/atamai child. "E iloa le tamaititi atamai ma poto, e toaga ma faaaloalo. (You can tell atamai and poto child. They are conscientious, hardworking and respectful - Ust1.) According to one rural teacher (RT6), even when she was not in the classroom the toaga child would tidy the desks and sweep the floor. They are "E toaga. E le faaotonu e le faiaoga." (Toaga - conscientious/hardworking. The teacher does not tell them what to do - UT5.) Toaga was also used in reference to the way children looked after themselves. The poto child is: "Ma le toaga i lona lavalava. E iloa le tamaititi atamai i ona lavalava. Toaga e fai lelei lona ulu." (Also toaga - conscientious in the way he/she dresses. You can tell an atamai - intelligent/clever child by his/her clothes. He/She is toaga - diligent

The word toaga and its associated meanings are described in more detail in the next chapter, in the section 'How do children learn?'
about doing his/her hair properly - RT6.) Of particular interest is that toaga behaviour was seen as necessary in order for a person to become poto/atamai but at the same time, toaga behaviour was seen as evidence of the state of being poto/atamai.71

The terms valea and vaivai were often used to describe children who were perceived as not poto and/or not atamai. Allardice (1985: 102) defines valea as “stupid, dull-witted, foolishly,” whilst Pratt (1912: 360) defines valea simply as “ignorant” or “to be ignorant”. More interesting are the definitions of vaivai. Allardice (ibid.: 101) defines vaivai as “be weak, soft, tired, timid, faint-hearted,” whilst Pratt (ibid.: 359) defines it as, “weak, of the body” and “to be weak and unable to bear anything, as a stick.” In the classroom, teachers frequently used vaivai to describe students who were academically weak. Likewise in interviews, students, parents and teachers repeatedly used the term vaivai and less frequently valea to describe students who did poorly in tests and exams or struggled with their school work.

It appears that in the same way that academic, intellectual and moral qualities were inextricably intertwined when participants used the concepts poto and atamai, so too academic, intellectual and moral qualities were inextricably intertwined in the concept vaivai. Children who did poorly at school were perceived as academically weak, but from most participants’ perspectives the origin of the weakness and, indeed, the weakness itself was moral in character. Children who did poorly did not work hard enough, did not listen carefully enough, and were not usitai - obedient.72 As perhaps suggested by the dictionary definitions, vaivai children lacked moral drive and as such were faint-hearted, weak and unable to bear anything. Children were vaivai and/or valea because:

O ia. O lona faatamala e a la ona valea. Toe le toaga e suesue, ma faitau. Lena e mafua ai lona valea. (Himself. His neglect/remissfulness/carelessness is the cause of his stupidity. Also not studying hard enough, and not reading. That’s the cause of his stupidity - UP1.)

Ae o tamaiti la e vaivai, o latou faatamala ma le le toaga e fai meaaoga, faitau api. ... E mafua i le tamaitiiti. (But children who are weak, it is their fault/neglectfulness and not being conscientious about doing school work, reading

70 Four adults also referred to the idea that some children were poto nana - hid their cleverness.
71 This has an interesting parallel with the word poto. Participants believed that by going to school, children might become poto in the sense of learn appropriate behaviour. They simultaneously believed that through the embodiment of appropriate behaviours children would become poto in the sense of achieve academic success.
72 The notion that the academically weak child is responsible for his low achievement is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.
their exercise books [implied meaning - revising their work for exams] ... The cause is the child - Ust1.)

E vaivai lava ia ia ia. Ona, e lē finau, e lē faamalosi foi. ... O le tamaitiiti lava ia e ala ai ona vaivai. O le tagata, e ala ona poto, ona o le finau ma le taumaafai. (She is the cause of her weakness [i.e. poor results]. Because, she does not strive, does not put energy [into her work]. ... The child herself is the cause of the weakness. The reason why a person is poto/ clever is because they strive and try - Ust3.)

Participants also used the term vaivai to describe the child who did not have poto and/or atamai qualities that are part of knowing how to behave appropriately. In an earlier example an urban teacher talked about the child who did not use his/her atamai - intelligence but instead went about making a noise. He concludes, “E iloagofie se tamaitiiti e vaivai le mafaufau. Eta u, o le tamaitiiti valea. Efealuai ma ee.” (You can easily tell a child who has weak thinking. You call them a foolish/stupid child. They go about shouting [i.e. behaving in an inappropriate way] - UT1.)

Valued learning and knowledge

The links between the concepts poto and/or atamai and moral/appropriate behaviour became even more apparent when participants responded to the question, ‘What kinds of things should children learn at school?’ Most adults (20 of 24 responses) referred firstly (and many exclusively) to moral outcomes. However, significant variations emerged between urban and rural students. Initial responses from rural students focused exclusively on moral objectives, whereas half of the urban students identified particular subject areas. In many instances, rural students only referred to academic learning when prompted. Likewise half of the urban students restricted their reply to subject areas until prompted. Interview material suggests that rural students are more keenly aware of faaSamoa and its focus on appropriate behaviour. Conversely, urban children are more likely to see school as a place where you learn academic skills and acquire knowledge.

93 Nine of twenty-four participants referred to academic goals in their first response. Five of the nine referred to both academic and moral objectives in initial responses.
Desired academic and intellectual outcomes

A total of nine teachers and parents identified academic outcomes in their initial response as to what they believed children should learn at school. Five of the nine simultaneously volunteered moral outcomes. Several parents talked about written and oral fluency in Samoan and English as essential for effective communication and finding employment. Several teachers focused on the idea that learning about other countries and other ways of life is important. One rural teacher believed that knowledge about other cultures enabled a person to reflect on their own culture, and decide what was good and not so good about each. One rural and three urban teachers talked about the changing world, the possibility of travel, living overseas, the flow of people in and out of Samoa and the need to understand people from other countries and communicate effectively with them. Almost all teachers and parents when asked to identify important curriculum areas focused on English and Samoan. Some emphasised Maths and its relevance to finding employment and budgeting wisely.

When Fairbairn-Dunlop (1982) interviewed Samoan parents of primary students in New Zealand, she found that many did not want their children to spend class time on Physical Education, Music and Art. Informal discussions with older Samoans indicated that most parents in Samoa during this period saw these subjects as maimau taimi - a waste of time and a distraction from getting good exam results. Instead, they believed teachers should concentrate on academic subjects. Interview responses in this research show that attitudes have changed over time.

Twenty-two participants were asked, 'Do you think Art, Music, and Physical Education (PE) are important curriculum areas?' All teachers and parents emphatically stated yes. However, when explaining why, most restricted their responses to sport and Art. One student believed that these subjects were unimportant because they were not formal subject areas (and therefore not tested). A second student suggested that Art, PE and Music would become important if examined and graded in reports.

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74 This question was not initially included in the interview schedule. As the study progressed it became clear that this was an interesting area of change. It was also interesting as an example of a situation where attitudes have changed but school practices do not necessarily reflect the changed attitudes.
Responses between participants as to why these subject areas are important showed remarkable consistency. Furthermore, responses were consistent with values and beliefs expressed in other contexts. Over half of the respondents saw Art and sport as a potential source of employment and income. Reflecting the pragmatic value placed on education a rural parent stated:

_Faapea le isi tagata, e le aoga (pause), le tusi ata. Ae tele foi le aoga o le tusi ata. Aua, a poto lau tusi ata ua maua foi au (pause) - E mafai ona e alu atu i fafo, ma maua sau faaloga, ma sau galuwea lelei foi. A poto foi e taalo, tasi lene mea e maua ai tupe mo le aiga (laughs). (Some people think, it’s not useful [pause], Art. But Art is very useful. Because if you are good at art you can go overseas, get a qualification, and also a good job. If you’re good at sports too, that’s one thing to get money for the family [laughs] - RP1.)_

Seven participants stated that sport provided opportunities to represent one’s country and travel/play overseas. Two elaborated on this, saying that by representing your country and excelling in sport you gained status/became well known. Nine participants (nine of twenty-two responses) believed that children had different abilities (i.e. not all were academic) and school should enable children to develop these ‘God-given gifts’.

Some of the responses suggest parents and teachers are beginning to see school as far more than a place that focuses on moral and academic learning and passing exams. Several urban participants stated that Art/PE/Music are important sources of enjoyment. Five adults believed that their inclusion created a more balanced learning/school experience. Two linked physical activity and art with intellectual stimulation. For one rural parent, _“E aoga foi le taaloga e faamatala le mafaufan o le tamaititi. Sau loa i totonu o le [potu]aoga, ua mata la e fai e le faiaga”_ (sport is good because it opens the child’s thinking/mind. When the child comes into the classroom, their brain is open [implied meaning - ready] for the subject that the teacher is doing - RP2). One rural teacher believed that the concentration involved in drawing enhanced a child’s intellectual development.

**Desired attitudinal and behavioural outcomes**

A total of 27 students, parents and teachers gave detailed explanations as to desired attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Eighteen referred specifically to the idea that children should learn _faaaloalo - respect at school. Of the 13 responses about the importance of a child’s va - relationship and/or va fealoai - respectful relationship with others, 10 responses about knowing how to behave appropriately and 14 responses about learning how to speak_
appropriately, many linked back to the concepts of respect and courtesy. The explicit focus on respect and courtesy is consistent with the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships at all times (Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Kruse Va’ai 1998; Mageo 1998). At school children should learn

\[ O \text{ le } faaaloalo. O \text{ le va o le } alamiati ma isi alamiti. O \text{ le va o ia ma lona faiaga. } O \text{ le va o ia ma isi faiaga. O le va o ia ma isi tagata o le mu. Va ma ona matua. } \]
\[ Ina ia iloa tautala, iloa savali, iloa foi nofo pe a i ai tagata ese. (Respect. The relationship between the child and other children. The relationship between him and his teacher. The relationship between him and other teachers. The relationship between him and people in the village. The relationship with his parents. To know how to talk [implied meaning - speak respectfully], know how to walk, know how to sit [implied meaning - know to sit quietly at lower level] when there are strangers [e.g. visitors] - RT5.) \]

\[ Ia te a’u a ia, e tatau ona aoao alamiit ai iloa tusitusi ma iloa foi se second language. Ae sili ona iloa le va fealoa. Ia iloa e le alamiititi, le nofo i lalo, o le a le talu o le a fai. Ia iloa foi ava i soo se tagata. E lē tagata i matua na fanau ai, ma a’u le faiaga, ma tagata ese mai ia te ia. E tatau ona aoao le amo, ina ia lelei le va ma isi tagata, ma pulea lelei lona tupaupua. (From my perspective, children should be taught how to write and know a second language. But more importantly they should know about respectful/courteous relations. A child should know how to sit down [reference to cultural practice that people of lower status like children sit/bend down/bow their head in the presence of a high status person], what they should say [implied meaning - child should know appropriate/polite speech]. They should also know to respect other people. Not only their parents who gave birth to them, and me the teacher and other people. They should learn how to behave, so that they have a good relationship with other people, and their development [growing up] is appropriate [meaning - behaviour is appropriate within the faaSamoa] - RT4.) \]

Fourteen responses related to the idea that at school children should learn to be obedient. In addition, five participants used the word faalogo - hear/listen/feel/pay attention, to imply obedience. Indeed, as noted by Mageo (1998) the word faalogogata - disobedience literally means to have difficulty hearing, listening and paying attention. The root of faalogo and faalogogata is logo, which in this context means to sense/feel/perceive. To faalogo literally means to use one’s senses. Implied in faalogo is more than just listening and paying attention, but also an ability to perceive, to take on board, and act accordingly and appropriately.

\[ E aoao mai le faiaga, ia faalogo lelei i le faiaga, ma aua le fai atu le faiaga, ae fai lava mea e loto i ai tamaiti. E lē faapena la tamaiti i matou vāsegā. E fiafia \]

\[ ^{75} \text{The last phrase is ambiguous in meaning. The term } pulea \text{ means to control. The phrase might refer (as translated above) to the child having control over their behaviour as they grow up. Alternatively, it might refer to the adult (e.g. parent or teacher) ensuring that they control/supervise the child’s development properly.} \]
Some respondents expressed the idea that teachers should focus on obedience because obedience is the foundation of other learning. "E tatau ona aoao ina ia usitai i le faaoga, ia malamalama lelei. Aua, a usitai ma faalogo lelei, e malamalama foi." (They should be taught to be obedient to the teacher, so that they can understand well. Because, if they are obedient and listen/are attentive they will also understand - RP6.) Similarly a rural student states that: "O mai loa, nonofo faalelei i lalo ma faalogo lelei" - (Come inside immediately, sit down properly and listen/attend carefully - Rst4.) The belief that children should firstly learn to listen and obey reflects core ideas about what is knowledge and how children acquire it. These ideas are discussed in the following chapter.

Consistent with earlier responses, a third of the respondents stated that school should focus on children’s amio - behaviour/conduct. Two strong themes emerged from interviews. Firstly, reflecting the pervasive emphasis on appropriate behaviour, adults expressed the belief that there is little value in academic success if a child’s/person’s amio - conduct is inappropriate. Teachers must focus on: "O le amio lava (emphasis). Aua, e leai se aoga e atamai, ae leaga le amio. Tatau ona iloa faaaloalo. ia pulea le amio." (The behaviour/conduct [respondent’s emphasis]. Because there’s no use being clever but having bad behaviour/conduct. It's important to know respect. So that the conduct/behaviour is restrained/controlled - UT1.) The focus on amio is a logical extension of the focus on education as a means to find work and a source of income in order to fulfil important family (i.e. look after one’s parents and family) and social obligations (i.e. contribute to faalavelave, village and church activities). If the amio - behaviour/conduct and associated attitudes and values are in place, children will get an education, find work, earn a good income, and take on socially valued roles and behaviours. If not, their poto/atamai - cleverness is in vain.

From the Samoan perspective poto/atamai qualities could be used for good and/or selfish purposes. It was not uncommon to hear someone comment about a financially successful person, ‘O le a le aoga o le poto, ae la e fia a’ai matua.’ - What use is it to be poto, but the parents are hungry. Sometimes the same emotion was stated as, ‘O le a le aoga o le tele o mea, ae la e fia a’ai matua.’ - What use is it to have a lot of things [implied meaning - be well
off], but the parents are hungry. The potential for *poto* to be misused is explained in detail by an urban parent (UP4).

_E i ai le poto e lelei, ma e i ai foi le poto e lē lelei. O le poto lelei ma le poto e lē o lelei. E maua le poto soona fai. E mimita. E lē iloa ona matua. Ua lē alofa. Ua lē alofa i sona aiga. Ua lē alofa i lona tuaoi. Nao ia lava. Ua lē maua le poto. Ua soona fai. ... O le isi ituaiga poto. Ua maua lē poto e fesoasoani i lona aiga. E lotu. O le poto e faautauta. (There is good cleverness and there is also cleverness that is not good. Good cleverness and bad cleverness. There is the cleverness that is thoughtless. _Full of itself That does not know one's parents [implied meaning - does not show respect and act in a loving way towards one's parents]. That has no love. That has no love for his/her family. Has no love for his/her neighbour. Only thinks of him/herself. He/She does not have cleverness/wisdom [implied - real cleverness/wisdom]. He/She is thoughtless. ... The other kind of poto. He/She has the kind of cleverness/wisdom that helps the family. He/She goes to church. The [kind of] cleverness/wisdom that is careful/thoughtful/prudent - UP4.)_

The second theme relates back to the idea that obedience a essential for learning to take place. From this perspective, successful academic teaching and learning are dependent on getting a child's *amio* right first. This idea is explicitly detailed in the following excerpt.

_Once e lelei le amio o lona uiga e lelei uma isi vaega. Ona tuu mai loa lea le curriculum. Toaga mai le tamaititi i le aoga, alofa i lona matua, ava i soo se tagata e fetaui i le auala, ma iloa tautala ma tu i totonu o le aoga. Ava i le faiaoga. (Once the conduct/behaviour is good, all other things will be good too. Then you can get on to the curriculum [implied meaning - you can get on with teaching]. The child will work hard at school, love their parents, respect other people they meet on the road, and know how to speak and behave properly at school. Respect the teacher - RT3.)_

Respondents also suggested that it was important that children at school learn to _ola mama_ - live a clean life. In some instances respondents restricted _ola mama_ to physical cleanliness and healthy lifestyle. However, _ola mama_ was more frequently used to refer to the idea of being morally clean (i.e. honest).

Two interrelated strands emerge from the emphasis on children needing to acquire and display appropriate behaviour at school. Firstly, appropriate behaviour embodied in the child is seen to almost magically bestow academic success. Hence, in respondents’ minds the child who is respectful, obedient, attentive, and has a willing manner will do well at school. By contrast, the academically weak child is described as _taa_ - a roam about, _faatamala_ - irresponsible and

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le alofa - lacking love. Secondly, socially valued behaviours are seen as important learning strategies in themselves, that enable academic success. This and other ideas related to how children learn are explored in the next chapter.

**Beliefs about why children are different in their abilities and achievement**

Students, parents and teachers all recognised that children differ in ability and achievement. Some believed that children are born with different abilities and potential. Some believed that children are born the same but circumstances in their lives led to individual differences. In interviews and in informal discussions, students and adults attributed differences to five broad causes. These included: a) a person’s toto - blood or gafa - line/lineage; b) faamaniaga a le Atua - God’s blessings; c) the child’s siosiomaga - (home) environment; d) economic factors; and e) differences in the quality of education between rural and urban schooling.

*Toto - blood*

All participants expressed awareness of the belief that a person’s toto - blood determined their educational success. However, not all supported this belief.

*Afai e ola mai le tamaititi, o ona matua e vaivai, e vaivai lava. Ae afai e ola mai le tamaititi i se aiga e atamamai ma popoto ma tulaga lelei galhega, e tatau foi ona atamai le tamaititi. ... E alu i le toto. Ia, o le gafa foi. (If a child grows up and his/her parents are [academically] weak, the child will be weak. But if the child grows up in a wise and clever family, who have high up work, the child should also be clever. ... It goes in the blood. Yes, also the family line - RT5.)*

Participants did not restrict the power of toto - blood and gafa - lineage to academic outcomes. Toto - blood and gafa - lineage had the power to determine what one did in life and the kind of person a child grew to be. When a person’s misdeeds were discussed, it was not uncommon to hear a person say, ‘Letioa. E soo le tamaititi i lona tama.’ - No wonder. The child takes after his father, or ‘E! E leaga le aiga’ - Hah! The family is bad. Several adult participants referred to the saying, ‘Ua so’o le moa sope i le moa sope’ - The bantam hen will be take after the bantam hen. Several also emphasised the idea that the power of blood/lineage is not easily broken. According to one rural teacher, if a parent is a lawyer, then some time in the future another family member will become a lawyer. “E lé mafai ona momotu le gafa lea.
Children and adults used the term 'bad blood' in two ways. Sometimes it was used to suggest genetic determination, and sometimes it inferred past misdeeds of family members that subsequently brought misfortune on their children and/or extended family members. Often respondents used it in both senses. Four of six rural teachers categorically believed that a child's *toto* - blood determined how well the child did at school. This position has significant implications in the classroom. Implicit in this position is the idea that the teacher is not responsible for students' achievement. Rather a student's success or failure is predetermined by family genes, blood and/or actions.

The teacher concludes that in this case there is little a teacher can do, except ensure that the child knows the basics and how to behave appropriately.

Ewalt and Makuau (1995) and Poasa et al. (2000) argue that in sociocentric societies like Samoa, a person's sense of self is intimately linked to the wider group, particularly their family. It appears that in the same way that an individual's behaviour and actions have the potential to *faato i lalo* - bring down a family (Macpherson and Macpherson 1985), so too the wider family has the power to *toso i lalo* - pull down the individual. This has enormous implications. If children see themselves as belonging to an *aiga faatauvaa* - unimportant family, *aiga vaivai* - weak (including academically weak) family or an *aiga le aoaoina* - uneducated family, and if they believe that *toto* - blood and/or *gafa* - lineage determines their success within and beyond school, they may see little purpose in attending school and working hard. Consistent with this observation, students often pointed to high achieving classmates and stated that these students did well because they had *popoto/ataamamai* - clever parents. Conversely, some students attributed poor results to parents who they described as *le aoaoina* - uneducated, *vaivai* - weak in learning/poor, *lē lava le atamai* - lacking in understanding/cleverness or *lē poto* - not clever.
Whilst participants were keenly aware of the belief that a child’s toto determined their academic success, not all believed it to be true. Just over a third believed that a child’s toto - blood determined how they did at school. The same number believed that toto - blood sometimes but not always played a part or that toto - blood was one of several factors that determined how a child did at school. Finally, just under a third rejected the belief. For many it was not consistent with their observations. Parents and teachers (especially urban) commented that sometimes children from aiga vaivai - weak and poorly educated families did well at school.

Two observations can be made from the excerpt above. Firstly, it appears that formal education has created a new context, where beliefs that might have been experienced as true in the past become problematic because they are now experienced as inconsistent with reality. Secondly, formal education appears to have created new ways to challenge traditional power structures. Namely, children from weak, uneducated families do sometimes succeed at school, find good employment and transform themselves into poto - clever/educated individuals and their families into aiga lelei - good/successful families.

For some, formal education confirmed rather than undermined their beliefs. Several teachers rephrased toto as biological or genetic forces. Several also used the Bible to support their belief that a person’s toto - blood determines their life. According to one rural teacher, “A ola mai le laau e leaga, e fua mai fua e leaga. Ae, a fua mai se laau e lelei, e fua mai fua lelei ma saga lelei atili ai” (If a bad tree grows, its fruit will also be bad. When a good tree grows, it bears good or even better fruit - RT3). However, others used the Bible to assert the idea of a loving God, who blessed each person with a different talent, “E tofi mai le tagata lea ma lana mea alofa mai le Atua. O isi tagata e kamuta, ae o isi e faFaatoaga” (God gives every person a gift. Some people are carpenters, but others are farmers - RT1). Again, implied in this statement is the idea that a person’s destiny is predetermined. The constraint of blood or lineage is replaced by the all powerful God, who preordains each human life.
Several urban teachers strongly refuted the idea that a child’s toto or gafa determined how they did at school. Indeed two teachers expressed anger towards such an attitude. From their perspective, all children were born the same. What mattered was the quality of the home environment. "E tutusa uma tamaiti, pe a fanau ifo le pepe. Muamua tausi lelei. Malosi, amata ona aoao. Aoo. Ave i le aoga faifeau" (All children are the same when they are born. First look after [the child] properly. [When the baby is] strong, start to teach him/her. Teach him/her. Take him/her to the pastor school - RP5). More common, however, was the idea that if a child was committed in their school work, then he/she would do well irrespective of his/her family.

Ou te le agree ai. Poo o le a le poto o le tamá. Ae, a le i ai, i le tamaititi le lagona, e le maua foi se mea. E le maua le poto. (I don’t really agree. Whatever the cleverness of the father. If the child does not have the feeling [implied - desire to do well/commitment], they will get/achieve nothing. They will not become clever - UP5.)

Faamaniuaga a le Atua - blessings of God

In Samoa there is a pervasive belief in the power of faamaniuaga a le Atua - God’s blessings. All participants strongly believed that if you lived a good, honest Christian life, worked hard, cared for your parents, served your matai - family chief, showed generosity in your relationships, contributed to the pastor and church, you would be blessed.

O le ola tautua ma faamaoni. O le tautua, o le punouai, o le tauivi. (The life of serving and being honest. Serving/supporting, working hard - UP2.)

A e galue ma le faamaoni, poo le a le laitiiti o le totogi, e te maua le faamaniuaga. E mulimuli mai le faamaniuaga a le Ahí. E le faapea e sau faaetaga sou manua, poo sou malaia. (If you work honestly, no matter how small the pay is, you will be blessed. The blessings of the Lord will follow you. Blessings and misfortunes do not originate from man [implying - ultimately God is in control of our lives] - UP3.)

God’s blessings manifest themselves in multiple ways. Generally, people referred to tangible outcomes like good health, academic success, having paid employment, a successful business, receiving a generous and/or unexpected gift (eg. a house built by an overseas family member)

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77 Approximately two-thirds of interviewed children had attended pastor school at some stage. Children attend pastor school late in the afternoon through the week. Readers are referred to Tanielu (2002b) for a detailed study of Aoga Faifeau - pastor school in Samoa and New Zealand. Subsequent chapters include comparisons between teaching practice in pastor and government primary schools.
and having sufficient income to meet their needs. A town teacher described in great detail how her life was blessed. She had been widowed for many years and without the support of a husband raised her children. She explained how she had worked hard as a primary school teacher, given generously to the church, taught Sunday school, supported her children through school and tried to teach them how to live good Christian lives. The teacher firmly believed that because of her efforts, she and her children had been blessed. They were fortunate to live at no cost in a house owned by a minister working in American Samoa. Her children had done well at school, gained tertiary qualifications and found well paid employment.

God's blessings are not restricted to the hardworking adult. Rather, the way a person lives their life directly impacts on the quality of their children's lives and the kind of people their children emerge to be. All participants believed that if a person worked hard, lived an honest life, looked after their parents and extended family, met their spiritual obligations and showed generosity in their relationships, their children would be blessed.

A lelei la 'u galuega i le aso, e molimaus mai taeao. E le gata iina. Afai e alu a 'e, alu a 'e, ma fai so 'u aiga ma sa 'u fanau o le a toe totó mai ia latou pe a tuputupu a'e latou aiga. (If I work well today [implied - at this time], it is evident [literal - witnessed] tomorrow. Not only that. If [time] goes on and on and I have a family and children, the blessings will fall on them as their family grows - RT3.)

E auala mai i au fanau. E manuia ai au fanau. Pe tei, ua manuia sau fanau. Ua sikolasipi i se mea. (It comes via your children. Your child will have good fortune. Suddenly, good fortune is on your children. They get a scholarship somewhere. Yes, that is [the result] of your good work - UP3.)

E le fua mai ia te au, ae la e fua mai i la 'u fanau. (It does not benefit [literal - bear fruit] for me, but it benefits [literal - bears fruit for] my children - UT5.)

The belief that good actions have the power to bring God's blessings on one's children is consistent with the Samoan world view. Firstly, children are not separate entities. Rather, children are an extension of their family. A person's sense of self, and indeed, a person's very being, are inextricably linked to their immediate family. From this perspective, if adults work hard and God's blessings fall on their children, they also fall on them (i.e. the parents). Not only do they fall on the parents, in the sense that their children are an extension of themselves, but they also fall on them in a very real but circuitous way. God's blessings are passed to children in the form of academic and material success, good health and the embodiment of socially valued behaviours. Thus God's blessings ensure that children have the means to tautsai - support their parents, and have the will and desire to do so.
Secondly, there is an almost magical element in God's blessing. As noted by Shore, "Samoan notions of causation require neither spatial nor temporal proximity of agent to the objects or effects" (1982: 172). Actions distant in time and place impact on the here and now. Thus a parent might believe that their conscientious approach to work and their uncompromising honesty are rewarded when one of their children gains a scholarship overseas. Thirdly, in the same way that bad and evil are often attributed to 'distortions of proper relationships' (ibid.), faamaniaga a le Atua can be seen as a direct consequence of relationships being in order. God is simultaneously a God to be feared and a God of love (Freeman 1984). When a person commits a wrongful act against or with another person, God has mana - power to punish the offender.78 This belief is still prevalent today. Whilst I was doing fieldwork an acquaintance's child was born with Downs Syndrome. The mother's brother blamed the mother for the child's condition, citing her irresponsible behaviour (i.e. going out to nightclubs, drinking and smoking). Conversely, when relationships are in order (i.e. when people give generously, look after their parents and family, serve their elders, live good Christian lives, and attend church), God will bless them.79

In almost all rural and many urban households, family members gather for daily devotions at dawn and in the early evening. This includes a Bible reading, hymn and prayer. In rural villages and some parts of the capital a bell rings to remind people to hurry home. Some fono - village councils also assign leoleo - wardens (term also used for policemen) to fine people caught wandering about during this time. Generally an older family member prays on behalf of the family and asks God to bless the children and assist them with their schoolwork. Parents also pray that children will be obedient, well behaved, and display respect to their elders. Hence, parents pray that children will acquire attributes that will in turn invite God's

78 Some people also believe in the power of an individual to curse or wish badly on another person and thus bring bad fortune and/or sickness to that person. Whilst in Samoa, I heard of several instances where a person was diagnosed with mai aitu - spirit sickness or a physical ailment which family members attributed to a curse or ill feelings between family members. This belief is evident in the feogaiga relationship between a brother and a sister. At all times a brother should treat his sister with utmost respect and endeavour to please her and meet her requests. Traditionally it was believed that if a brother failed to do this, the sister had power to curse the brother and bring misfortune into his life (Schoeffel 1979).

79 During the time, I lived in Samoa we experienced two devastating cyclones. During the second cyclone twenty-eight neighbours spent six days sheltering from the winds and rain in our family home. Each morning and evening an elderly neighbour led our lotu - devotions. Each day she prayed fervently that God would forgive Samoa for its heathen and immoral ways, have mercy and release her people from the present infliction (i.e. the cyclone).
blessings. On a more subtle level, the embodiment of socially desired attributes and behaviours attracts yet another kind of blessing, namely that of social approval for both the child and parent. All parents keenly desire that other people perceive each of their offspring as *o se tamaititi lelei* - a good child.

Unlike the belief that *toto* - blood determines one’s future, the belief in God’s blessings includes a greater sense of agency. Participants were keen to point out that God’s blessings require human action. It is not sufficient to merely feel or say something. Emotions and words need to be translated into action. Suggestive of a *feagaiga* - covenant relationship between man and God, participants believed that if man played his part, God would play his. This idea is expressed by an urban parent.

_Ae ona o le tagata lava ia ma lona olaga. E lē tauivi. E lē finau. E ala ona lē maunua se faamanuiaga a le Atua. O le Atua e tumu i faamanuiaga. O le Atua o faamanuiaga. E ala i le ola galue o le tagata. E ala i le tauuta galue. Soo se mea e tauuta ai. Pei o totonu o le aiga, i totonu o le lotu, i le kamupani. O le mua. Poo fea lava le mea e galue ai, e faamaoni. (But it is the person and his life. He/she does not work hard. He/she is not determined. [That] is the reason he/she does not receive God’s blessing. God is full of blessings. God is [a God of] blessings. [Blessings] come to the person who lives a [implied - hard] working life. They come from our willingness to serve and work hard. Anything we serve/do. Whether it is in the family, in the church, in the company/business. The village. No matter where the work is, be honest [i.e. work honestly] - UP2.)_

Thus within the concept of *faamanuiaga a le Atua* - blessings of God is the idea that even the poor and disempowered can transform their lives and those of their children.

The belief in God’s blessings sustained people in their day-to-day lives. Although a person might work hard and be paid a pittance, Samoans believed that their efforts were not in vain. Adults frequently used the expression, ‘_E ese auala a le Atua’_ - God works in mysterious ways to convey the idea that man could not begin to understand God’s mind. Rather one needed to believe and have faith. Speaking in reference to teachers’ low pay, an Inservice Trainer stated, ‘_E leai se afu e mainau i le tototi a le Atua._’ (No sweat [effort] is wasted [compared] with God’s pay [i.e. God’s blessings].) Implied in this statement is the idea that

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80 Wages are very low in Samoa. The minimum wage in the private sector starts at $S1.60 per hour (i.e. less than $NZ1.00). At the time of the 2001 Census, 29% of the salaried/waged population earned less than $S5,000 and 46% earned between $S5,000 and $S10,000 (Statistical Services Division Government of Samoa 2001).
whilst your pay might be inadequate and you might feel dissatisfied, your efforts are not wasted, because ultimately God will reward you. Put another way an urban teacher stated:

"Ou te le o galue mo se totogi. Pau lava la 'u galuega ia fua la 'u galuega i tamaiti. Aua, a ta galue ma le faamaoni, e fua foi i lata fanau le galuega. (I don't work for money. The only [reason] for my working [implied-hard work], is that my work will bring blessings to [our] children. Because if I work honestly my work will bear fruits for our children - UT5.)"

Participants did not restrict the concept of faamanuiaga to a person's relationship with God. Parents too have power to bless their children. Indeed, several rural students attributed their success at school to their parents' blessing. "O le fesoasoani a matua ia te a'u, ae ou te le i usu i le aoga, e faamanuiia mai, 'Manuia le aoga'. Tutusa pe leai se tupe, ou te manao i le faamanuiaga sa aumai e lo 'u tama ia te au." (My parent's help for me before I leave for school is to wish me well/bless me [by saying], 'All the best/success/blessings for school.' Even if there is no money [implied - for the child], I want the good wishes [success/blessings] my father gives to me - Rst6.) Students, especially rural, also talked about their parents giving them advice as they left for school. Invariably the advice focused on appropriate behaviour. "Nofo faalelei, aua le taalo, ma faalogo lelei i le faiaoga" (Sit still, don't play, and listen carefully to the teacher - Rst3).

A parent's blessing can also be understood as an act of goodwill or gratitude towards their children that explicitly or implicitly invokes God's blessings on their children. As stated by a teaching colleague, parents themselves do not have the power to confer blessings on their child. Rather the parent 'calls on' God to bless their children. Thus when the parent says to the child, 'ia manuia lau aoga.' - May your schooling be blessed, they are in fact expressing in a shortened form, 'ia faamanuiia atu e le Atua lau aoga' - May God bless your schooling.

Several parents also suggested that the power of a parent's blessing directly depended on the quality of the relationship between a child (including adult children) and his/her parents.

"Tausi ma le faamaoni. E leai se tali upu. E leai se gutu a. E fai ma le faamaoni mea uma ma le naumau alofa i matua. ... E i ai le faamaniaga e tuina mai. 'Ia tua manuia, ma lelua fanau.' ... [inaudible] ... Faalogo atu loa i isi, 'Ia, ua imu uma e le fanau a Pai le faamaniaga a matua, aua sa tausi lelei la matua.' (Look after [their parents] honestly. Not answering back. They don't answer back [literal - they don't have a mouth]. They do everything honestly and truly love their parents [i.e. look after them properly]. ... There is a blessing that is given. 'Bless you both [i.e. adult children] and your children.' You hear others saying, 'Yes - Pai's children are drinking the blessings of [their] parents, because they looked after their parents well.' - RP6.)"
Several also suggested that in the past parents’ faamanuiaga - blessings had greater mamana - power because children then served their parents more honestly. “E leai se faalogogata. A’o aso nei, ua lè ava le tamaititi i lona tama ma lona tina” (There was no disobedience [meaning - children were not disobedient]. But today, the child does not respect his/her father and mother - RP5). Like God’s blessings, a parent’s blessings are not restricted to school outcomes. A parent’s blessing might manifest itself in many ways. In interviews, parents and teachers gave a range of examples including ability to use upu faaaloalo - respectful language, perform as an orator, retain genealogical knowledge, and knowledge of traditional healing.

Underlying the concept of faamanuiaga a le Atua - blessings of God and faamanuiaga a matua - blessings of parents is the central importance of relationships in Samoa. If a person’s relationships with his/her parents, wider community and God are in order, then that person and their progeny would be blessed. Fundamental to these relationships is the idea of respect, obedience and willingness to serve. A good child, no matter what their age, respects, cares and provides for their parents. Likewise, a good, honest person respects and serves God. God’s blessings have the power to transform and enrich a person and their children’s lives (e.g. bestow on them cleverness, wisdom, success at school, good employment). Children, fed and sustained by their parents and more importantly God’s blessings, are in turn able to look after their parents, contribute to the church and the wider family. Thus a complex web of relationships is woven that sustains each other through time. The reciprocal nature of these relationships is captured in the following two excerpts:

O le foai fua o le atamai. O le atamai o le tagata ona o le ola taovi i o le tagata ma le finafinau ia maua le faamanuiaga a le Atua. Maua le faamanuiaga a le Atua i matua. Faamanuia ai fanau. Faamanuia atu matua i fanau. Manuia fanau. Tauli mai e fanau le manuia lea i matua. Ua maua uma faamanuiaga. Ua maua faamanuiaga a le Atua, ua faaesaa e le Atua i tagata uma. Faaeaa e le Atua a tatou fanau. Faaeaa mai foi e fanau tatou. Maua mea e faataunu ai manaoga, faatino ai le tausiga o fanau, aiga, ekalesia ma niu.81 (Cleverness/wisdom is given freely [by God]. People acquire cleverness/ wisdom because they work hard/deeply desire to be blessed by God. The blessings of God fall on the parents. Children benefit [from the blessings]. The parents bless their children. The children do well. The children return the blessings of the parents. Every one is blessed. God

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81 Allardice defines ea as to “raise, elevate, come to surface, free, release” and faaea as “uphold” (Allardice 1985: 15). Pratt defines faaea as “to raise up, to exalt” (Pratt 1911: 80).
blesses/enriches/lifts up everyone. God blesses/enriches/lifts up our children. Our children enrich [help]/lift us up. [That way we] get the things that we need, that enable us to look after the children, extended family, church and village - UP2.)

(The parent explains that when a parent is happy with his/her child, he/she says), 'Ia manuia oe. Ia iu lelei lau aoga. 'Ona alu loa [le tamaitiiti] i le aoga. La e i ai le faamanuiaaga a matua. Iu manuia (le aoga). ... Maua le galuega, maua le totogi, maua mai le tupe e faatino manaoga o matua. E le faamanuiaaga a le fanau, ae ua faamanuia foi matua i a latou galuega. O lea, ua maua una faamanuiaaga e lua. Maua faamanuiaaga a fanau, maua foi faamanuiaaga a matua. Ua manuia matua e aia i le galuega a fanau, ma ua manuia foi fanau ua maua galuega. ('Blessings/success on you. That you will finish well your schooling.' Then the child sets off to school with the parent’s blessings. [They] finish [school] successfully. [The child] gets work, gets paid, gets money, to satisfy the needs/wishes of parents. Not only are the children blessed, but the parents are also blessed by them having work. So two blessings fall on everyone. There are blessings on the children, [and] blessings also on the parents. The parents are blessed because the children have work and the children are blessed because they have work - UP2.)

Other factors that affect children’s progress at school

Participants also recognised a range of social and material factors that affected how students did at school. Although discussed separately under the headings Siosiomaga - home environment; Material factors - poverty; and Differences in schooling - rural versus urban, the three areas are closely interlinked. Relevant to this section is Bourdieu’s distinction between economic, social and cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that economic capital is the root of all capital because it can be readily converted to social and cultural capital. Parents and teachers were keenly aware that access to money enabled a person to participate more fully in status-raising and relationship-building activities (i.e. increase their social capital). Many also believed that social standing and a network of relationships directly and indirectly impacted on children’s schooling, educational and life opportunities. 82

The three headings in this section loosely align with the three kinds of cultural capital outlined by Bourdieu (ibid.). These include: embodied cultural capital (physical, intellectual and 

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82 Bourdieu defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and

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psychological dispositions of family members), objectified cultural capital (cultural artefacts like access to readers, books, and other resources) and institutionalised cultural capital (different structures and institutions within a given society). Bourdieu suggests that a person’s ability to appropriate objectified cultural capital and access institutionalised cultural capital directly depends on the cultural capital embodied in a family and that this is largely acquired and transmitted through socialisation. For Bourdieu unequal access to cultural capital directly contributes to unequal academic achievement. In Samoa parents saw education as a means to change economic status and acquire social and cultural capital.

Siosiomaga - home environment

Within each level in fieldwork schools there were dramatic variations in student achievement. For example, in a Year 3 class at Atafu some students were reading and writing confidently in Samoan whilst others struggled to read simple high frequency words and could not write independently. In the same school, several Year 8 students scored over 65% in trial Year 8 National Examination test papers whilst the bottom quartile scored under 18%. When asked why some students got poor results, students, teachers and parents almost always placed responsibility on the student and/or his/her parents.

Teachers felt strongly that some parents did not value education. They noted that some families encouraged their children to attend Pastor School and Preschool (where available) whereas others did not. Several commented on the huge variation in age that parents sent their children to school. For example, in Folau School the youngest Year 1 student had enrolled at four years seven months whilst the oldest enrolled at nine years four months. At Atafu, the youngest enrolled at four years five months and the oldest at seven years eleven months. Teachers also noted irregular attendance, especially in lower levels. In Folau School, 11 to 15 of 45 children in a Year 1 class were absent on most days during a six-week fieldwork period. Teachers attributed the poor attendance to parents indulging their young children (i.e. allowing them to stay at home) and an attitude that education at the lower levels was not as important. In interviews and informal discussions teachers also referred to children not attending school because they had been kept at home to look after younger siblings, help with family chores or accompany a parent to Apia or a faalavelave - important event. In and

recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively - owned capital” (Bourdieu 1975: 51).
around Apia it was not uncommon to see primary-aged children selling handicraft items and produce during school hours.

Participants recognised that children’s home environments differed and that this impacted on how well they did at school. Firstly, all groups talked about material differences. Some linked material well-being to children’s physical health and described this as a precondition to academic success. Secondly, some noted differences in the nature and quality of the parent-child relationship. A small number of teachers and several teacher educators suggested that some parents/caregivers did not engage in sustained verbal exchanges with their children, made little effort to elaborate their speech for the child or expand the child’s speech. Some referred to adults often giving short and sometimes abrupt responses to children’s queries. In a similar vein, Ochs (1988) and Odden and Rochat (2004) noted an adult preference for triadic interactions with children. 83

Adult and student participants believed that responsible parents cared about their children and did not allow them to roam about. Speaking in reference to high achieving students in her class, a rural student stated:

_E lelei matua. E le tuu e ahu le tamaititi e taa, ae le fai se mea ai mo matua. E fesaga'i ma matua i taimi uma. Pe fai le lotu. Faasaga mai (pause) la e i ai matua. Ae, e le o le faia o le lotu ae taa solo le tamaititi._ (The parents are good. They do not allow the child to _taa_ - wander aimlessly about and not prepare food for the parent. They attend to their parents’ [needs] all the time. Like when they do devotions. They face towards/attend their parents. It’s not as if they do the devotion and the child is wandering about - Rst1.)

Several themes emerge in this passage that are central to Samoan ways of thinking. Responsible parents focus on appropriate behaviour and ensure that their children obey and attend their elders. In this way relationships are ‘in order’ and children consequently do well. Irresponsible parents let their children roam about and their children do not attend, obey, and display respect towards their elders. If relationships (i.e the foundation of success) are not in order, children will not do well. However, these ways of thinking are being challenged as people confront situations where new experiences challenge previously held beliefs and

83 Refer to Chapter Four for a detailed discussion on the differences between dyadic and triadic relationships and the implications for primary education.
understandings. In particular, town teachers noted that some children are impolite and disrespectful yet do well at school.

Consistent with Bourdieu’s (1975) idea of cultural capital, some parents and teachers noted that they or other parents did not have the knowledge and skills to help their children. Students, parents and teachers recognised that children from homes where one or both of the parents were well educated and/or fluent in English were hugely advantaged. Several tertiary educated adults suggested a much more subtle advantage. The educated parent recognised the social, psychological and physical conditions that enabled deeper learning to take place. This is hinted at by Su'alii-Sauni who writes passionately about “trying to reconcile the extremely frustrating demands of my Samoan father with my need to gain some emotional headspace so that I could adequately digest the seemingly foreign sociological concepts” (Su'alii-Sauni 2002: 3-4). During this research two colleagues talked about feelings of anger and frustration when constant parent demands on their time interfered with their ability to concentrate in a sustained way on academically challenging tasks. One believed that her father did not perceive learning as ‘real’ work. For her, not only was her ability to learn disrupted by interruptions but it was simultaneously blocked by the strong emotions generated by her frustration. When her father constantly asked her to stand up and make a cup of tea or get a glass of water, she began to feel, “Musu. Faalii ma ita. E iu ua fefiloi le mafafau. Ma ua le mafai ona toe foi atu i le galuega sa fai.” (Fed up/unwilling. Mad and angry. In the end [my] mind is all mixed up. It is not possible to return to the work I was doing.) This same idea is expressed by a rural parent:

A alu atu matua e fai atu, ‘Tuu le mea na ma tago e fai le mea lea.’ Mea na i lo ‘u mafafau toatasi, o le aafiaga o le mafafau o isi tamaiti, ma e pei e valea. La e fai atu i ia i le mea e fai, ma ua tu le tamaititi ai ua ita. Ma le ita na, la e alu e fai feau. Toe foi mai i le mea sa fai ma ua le fia fai loa. Ua musu. (The parent goes and says, ‘Leave what you are doing and do this.’ That’s the thing in my mind, that disturbs the mind of some children and it’s like [they] become mad. You tell them to go and do something and the child stands up, but is angry. [The child] carries that anger as they do the job. [The child] returns to what they were doing but they no longer want to do it. They are unwilling/fed up - RP4.)

84 In many households children (including adult children) are expected to willingly comply with an instruction no matter what the circumstances. The reference to anger arose from the frustration of being disturbed but feeling unable to not comply. In Samoa all children, from a young age take on a range of chores. As noted by Ochs (1982), high status adult behaviour is typified by minimal movement. It is not uncommon for an adult to call a child to fetch an item that is much closer to the adult than the child.
The parent then reiterated that the adult should recognise that the child’s mind was engaged on a task (i.e. schoolwork) and their request broke the child’s engagement.

Sometimes tensions arose between previously held and emerging beliefs and understandings. For example, most students, parents and teachers described the academically successful student as *toaga* - conscientious at school and at home. Participants linked academic success with *faamamuaiga a le Atua* - blessings of God that fell on a person and/or their children when they served their parents, family and church and worked hard. At the same time, some believed that service in the form of *feau* - chores could negatively impact on children’s schooling. In one family a 16-year-old son at upper secondary school took over his sick father’s role in the family business. Some nights he spent three to four hours waiting for the return of their fishing vessel, meeting the crew, and helping unload and sort the fish. His parents were keenly aware of the conflicting pressures on their son. Adults also made indirect references to competing commitments to culturally valued activities (e.g. contributions to church and *faalavelave* - important events) that made it difficult to meet school-related costs.

Likewise in New Zealand, Samoans have expressed difficulty reconciling time and financial demands of church, family, *faalavelave* and education (Utumapu 1992; Brown 1995; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004).

In Samoa children are an important economic resource. Children, teenagers, young adults and untitled family members are expected to serve their parents, elders and family *matai* - chief and assist with family and village-related chores (Schoeffel 1979; Shore 1982; Brown 1986; O’Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Field 1996; Mageo 1998). However, the nature and extent of *feau* - chores vary greatly pending on a range of socioeconomic factors. These include: a) economic status of the family; b) social status of the family; c) relative position of the child within the family; d) the relative position of the child’s immediate family within the extended family; e) family size; f) availability of siblings/family members to share work loads; g) access to technologies that reduce human input (e.g. washing machines, kerosene stove etc.); h) gender; i) physical location of the family (rural/semi rural/urban); and j) perceived academic ability of the child. In interviews rural children made frequent references to family *feau* - jobs. Some participants strongly believed that family tasks had a negative impact on some students’ school work.

_Mea e aafia ai mea aoga a isi tamaiti Samoa. A o atu i le fale, faapea matua. 'Ja, sulu fou ie. (inaudible sentence). Amo mai ni popo. 'Alu e ligi mai se ti.' Ua le maua se taimi e fai se mea aoga. E oo i le po. 'Fai mea ati.' 'Sau! Fai le saka.' Ua_
...E lea'aga ma'afepena. E le' ma'a se poto. O ma'tua lelei, a e alu atu [i le fale] e'fai mai, 'Sau loa e ai.' Ona alu lea e fai ta fea'u, tae le otaota. 'Sau la ia e fai au mea aoga.' (That's the thing that affects some Samoan children's schoolwork. They go home, and their parents say to them, 'Put on your lavalava [implied - working clothes]. [Inaudible phrase] Collect some coconuts.' 'Go and pour some tea.' The child does not get any time to do school work. It gets to night time. 'Prepare the food.' 'Come! Boil the food.' [The child] does the food, finishes eating, and it is night. ...That kind of parent is bad. [The child] will not become clever. [With] good parents, if you go home, they will say. 'Come and eat.' Then [I] go and do the jobs, pick up the rubbish. 'Come and do your homework' - Rst6.)

Parents often expressed regret and sorrow at the heavy tasks they placed on their children. Indeed the desire that their children succeed at school was in part based on the hope that their children might escape 'the burden' of a subsistence lifestyle. Rural male students referred to collecting and carrying food from the plantation, gathering, carrying and cutting firewood, preparing food, and cooking the saka - boiled staple crops over an open fire. Indeed, one rural teacher attributed the drop in Year 7 and 8 male student numbers at school and their lower achievement to their heavier workloads. Rural girls and town children referred to lighter tasks like looking after younger siblings, picking up the rubbish, and doing the dishes or washing. 

In some instances, jobs usually assigned to older siblings fell on younger family members. This especially occurred in rural contexts where older siblings attended secondary school or worked in Apia, and stayed with town relatives or returned late afternoon to the village.

Two interesting teacher perspectives emerged. Firstly several town teachers expressed the idea that if a child was not doing well at school and not working hard, it was better that they stayed home and helped their family. During class observations, several teachers when scolding an off task student, told the student that it was better that they stayed home and helped their family, rather than waste their time at school. This attitude was shared by some parents who encouraged an academically weak child to leave school or placed greater demands on them whilst at school. 

By carrying a disproportionate share of family tasks the

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85 Many medium and higher income families in Apia employ a teine fai galuega - housegirl (who may be a teenager, young or mature adult) to look after their children, cook and do the housework. In such households, children may have few or no chores.

86 Tanielu (1997) also noted the belief that it was better for an academically weak child to stay at home and help. Tanielu notes that some parents praised, encouraged and loved the academically successful offspring more than his/her siblings.
child/teenager enabled a more academically able sibling to continue at school or focus on his/her schoolwork.

Some teachers believed that some parents did not care as much about an academically weak child. Others refuted this position. From their perspective children are different. Some are academic. Some are not. A parent invested time, energy and resources in the academic child with the hope that they might finish school, find employment and the means to look after their parents and family. Conversely, parents recognised the value of the child who remained in the village, worked on the plantation and served their family and matai. The importance of a child/teenager/young adult’s contribution to a rural household can only be understood from within the socioeconomic context of a developing country. Like many other Pacific Island nations, rural Samoa is typified by a low GNP, semi-subsistence lifestyle, and out-migration to the capital and Pacific Rim countries (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Asian Development Bank 2000). As a result, many families experience a critical labour shortage (O’Meara 1990). In this context a child’s, teenager’s, or young adult’s physical contribution to their household is a functional necessity.

Parents’ attitudes reflect their beliefs and understandings about the purpose of education. As discussed earlier in the chapter, adults and children believed that children went to school to become poto, so that they could find well paid employment and contribute to a range of socially valued goals (i.e. look after their parents, and give to the church, etc.). If a child did not do well at school, it was better that they stayed home and followed the equally viable pathway of tautua - service to their parents and family matai. The importance of this role is caught in the saying, ‘O le ala i le pule o le tautua’ - The road to power is through servitude.

Again, a range of subtle contradictions emerged in the relationship between feau - chores, tautua - service and academic success. On the one hand service was perceived as an expression of love and respect to parents and elders and the appropriate path to assuming responsibility. On the other hand, some degree of withdrawal from family service was necessary for academic success. Students, parents and teachers recognised this. ‘Matua lelei’ - ‘good parents’ were fuafua - measured in the demands that they placed on their children. Indeed, sometimes a parent of a Year 7 or 8 student took on a child’s chores so that they could prepare for exams and/or do their homework. Thus the arrival of formal education has led in some households to a subtle inversion of adult-child roles. Rather than the child serving the
adult, the parent actively chooses to orientate his/her behaviour around the needs of the child. From a Samoan perspective, loving children recognise their parents' sacrificial act and as an expression of their *alofa* – love are *toaga* – conscientious with their schoolwork. Ideally, children reciprocate their parents’ sacrifice by succeeding at school, finding work and one day looking after their parents.

Children from socially disempowered families were disadvantaged at school in multiple ways. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter Four, some teachers showed less interest in students who came from *aiga faatuavaa* - families of little importance. Secondly, students and parents from poor and socially insignificant families had fewer social contacts and social networks to tap into (i.e. limited social capital)(Bourdieu 1975). Thirdly, they and their parents were less likely to place demands on others or assert their wishes. Fourthly, children growing up in this environment were exposed to a restricted range of interactions and experiences. Finally, when students did see their parents interacting with other adults in the extended family and wider community it was often in a role of deference and service. Children from disempowered households were less likely to see a parent assuming a leadership role, asserting an opinion and challenging others. These observations are consistent with Fairbaim-Dunlop (1984), Ewalt and Makaua (1995), and Poasa et al. (2000) who noted that in sociocentric societies like Samoa, a person’s sense of self and self-worth is intimately linked to his/her immediate and extended family. In a similar vein, Schoeffel (1979) noted that the status of a child’s family largely determined the nature and extent of a child’s exposure to adult interactions. Finally, researchers have noted that the higher the status of a person, the greater their right to express a point of view, make decisions and ascribe meaning to given situations (Shore 1982; Ochs 1988; Liu 1991; Duranti 1994; Mageo 1998; Huffer and So’o 2001).

Some participants recognised the relationship between social capital, personal efficacy, and classroom interactions. Perhaps one of my more humourous encounters occurred in a Year 1 classroom. One child literally and figuratively stood out. About twenty centimetres taller than his classmates and twice the size (reflecting his rich diet), the child spent the day assertively echoing his teacher’s orders, directing other classmates and correcting their behaviour (i.e. unusual classroom behaviours for a five-year-old student). The son of a church minister, the child assumed his right to direct others and claim teacher time. Equally interesting was the teacher’s response. Aware of the parent’s status, the teacher accommodated the child’s atypical behaviour. Some teachers recognised that both the child and teacher shaped
classroom interactions and that sometimes it was difficult to change/shift children’s behaviour.

*O isi tamaiti pei o tamaiti maualalo a* (pause), *pei e fefe. Pei e iloa e lè lelelè aiga. Ae o le isi tamaitititi (pause). E confident. E lelelè aiga. ... E pau a la’u tala ou te fai i ai. ‘E tasi a ou tonu.’ (Some children, like poor/humble children (pause) it’s as if they are scared. It’s as if they know that they come from a not very good family. But other children (pause). They are confident. [They] come from a good family. ... There’s only one thing I say to them. ‘You are all the same [implied - to me].’ - UT5.)

**Material factors - poverty**

Students, parents and teachers saw a link between academic success and material well-being. In urban schools, teachers commented that children from socioeconomically advantaged homes were more likely to be in A stream classes whilst students from poor families were generally found in lower streams. However, all teachers recognised that there were exceptions.

*E te iloa, e eseese (pause) le alu i luma o le aoga. Poo o le afafine o le faifeau. Aua, o le faifeau e maua tupe. E alu i luma le aoga o le tamaititi la e fai faleoloa (le aiga). O le tamaititi e leai se faleoloa, poo se (pause), e vaivai i mea tau seleni, ou te matea e vaivai le aoga. ... É le tutusa.* (You know, there is a difference in progress at school. Like the church minister’s daughter. Because the church minister has money. The storekeeper’s child [also] moves ahead at school. But the child who has no shop, or (pause) is financially weak, I predict they will be weak at school. ... It is not the same - RP2.)

Some urban teachers believed that whilst some families genuinely struggled to meet school costs, a small number spent their money inappropriately (e.g. at bingo or on beer). Several educators noted a contradiction between what some parents said (i.e. that their children’s education was important) and what they did (i.e. prioritising other things over and above meeting school expenses). In Viliamu, teachers were keen to point out that school costs were minimal (school fees capped at $S5.00 per thre terms and the ‘school fund’ capped at $2.00 per annum). However, rural parents were equally keen to point out, "*E lè gata i le pilì. E tele mea e fai.*" (It doesn’t finish with the bill. There are many things to do/to pay - RP1.) Rural parents talked about providing lunch/or lunch money for their children, food for the teachers’ lunch,87 food or gifts for visitors to the school and bus fares for older siblings who attended

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87 In some villages like Viliamu, families are rostered to provide lunch for the teachers. Family members arrive at school, with cooked staple crops (taro, banana, breadfruit and yam) and a range of meat, fish and seafood dishes.
school in Apia. All students, parents and teachers were aware of situations where children left school because their family had been unable to pay the school fee. However, most saw this as a problem at the secondary level where fees were significantly higher.

*O isi tamaiti a fai atu le pili, e taofi loa e matua tamaiti. Sei maua se pili, faataoa ahiali mai. O le fafaga (pause) e faapena isi tamaiti. A oo i le tamai o le fafaga e le toe aoga.* (Some children when they are told [implied- when student is reminded about an overdue payment] about the school fee, their parents keep them at home. Until they get the school fee, then they appear. Feeding the teachers (pause) it’s like that for some students. When it reaches the time to feed the teachers they stop going to school - Rst5.)

Students and parents repeatedly introduced the idea that some children discontinued school or did not attend because they felt *ma* - embarrassed or ashamed by their financial circumstances or inability to meet school requests. This is consistent with previous research that suggests a high sensitivity to shaming and public censure (Gerber 1975; Shore 1982; Mageo 1991; Mageo 1998; Vaipae 1999). Urban and rural students especially linked feelings of shame and embarrassment with not having lunch, lunch money or feeling that their lunch was inadequate.

*"O isi tamaiti a leai se meaai, faapea le tamaititi, 'Ou te le toe aoga aua ua ou ma aua ua leai se meaai."* (If some children have no food, the child thinks, ‘I won’t go to school again because I am ashamed because I have no food’ - Rst5.) Likewise when families could not provide food for the teachers or a requested item, children felt ashamed and unwilling to go to school. Parents keenly felt their children’s sense of shame and struggled to meet school requests. *"Afai ou te iloa ua aafia le tamaititi ona o le mativa, ia taumafai ta ita, le tina, e maua se auala e faafiafia ai le tamaititi e ahu atu i le aoga. ... "Onasai ma tali le tiga. Aua, e aumai lava e Maria ma Iesu le faasoasoa mo tatou."* (If I know that our children are affected/hurt because of being poor, I as the mother, try to find some way to make the child happy so that they will go to school. ...[She then elaborated that this was a source of great sadness but that she and her husband were comforted by the thought,] ‘Be patient and bear with the pain. Because Mary and Jesus will provide for us - RP4.)

A range of factors impacted on parents’ ability to meet school-related costs. This included: a) whether a family member was in paid employment; b) the number of adults in paid employment in an extended family; c) the number and level of children attending school; d) whether the family received financial assistance from family members living in Pacific Rim countries; and e) the number of dependent extended family members. Participants were keenly aware that family circumstances differed.
Throughout rural and town interviews, parents constantly raised the idea that life was not easy and that all parents desired the best for their children but faced enormous challenges. Many students were keenly aware of their parents’ sacrifice and expressed feelings of indebtedness and obligation. As stated by one rural student, “E le su’egofie le totoagi o le pili. (It is not easy to find the money to pay the [school] bill - Rst4.)

A small number of participants challenged growing inequalities between rich and poor, powerful and disempowered in Samoa and expressed a keen awareness of the links between economic well-being, access to social networks and resources. Indeed, two urban participants suggested that those in power put in place policies and practices that ensured that they and their families remained in power and that the poor remained poor and disempowered.

Differences in the quality of schooling - rural versus urban

A significant number of rural students attend primary schools in the Apia area. At Viliamu school approximately half the students came from outer villages. Students travelled by bus and private transport or resided with town-based relatives. The tendency for rural students to
enrol in Apia schools led to extreme overcrowding in some schools.\textsuperscript{89} DOE/MESC attempted to address this by introducing zoning, actively promoting rural schools and closing the Malifa Compound schools (where overcrowding had been extreme). Despite these measures, many rural parents continue to send their children into Apia in the belief that they will have a better education there. This section briefly reviews the multiple positions held by students, parents and teachers on the pros and cons of rural versus urban schooling.

Three-quarters of interviewed rural adults believed that overall, rural children received the same schooling in rural and urban schools. Four referred to MESC’s campaign to encourage parents to support village schools. However, all expressed awareness of the common belief that schooling in Apia was better. Many of the interviewed parents believed that urban schools: a) placed greater emphasis on English,\textsuperscript{90} b) had better qualified teachers; c) had more hardworking teachers; and d) had better resources.

Several interesting perspectives underlay these beliefs. Firstly, several parents linked proximity to MESC offices (i.e. the centre and source of authority) with Apia teachers working harder. In each case, participants believed that close to the ‘eye’ of the MESC office, teachers would be more honest in their work. This perspective ties back to Shore’s (1982), Ochs’s (1988), and Duranti’s (1994) analyses of Samoan conceptualisation of space. \textit{Luma} - front and centre areas of a house and village are associated with public view and polite, formal and appropriate behaviour. Here guests are formally welcomed and generously provided for. By contrast, \textit{tua} - back and periphery areas are associated with informal, less controlled and sometimes less appropriate behaviour. Here people’s actions are out of sight and not as closely monitored. In these areas, the activities and people within them are often deemed less important. ‘\textit{E manatu faatauva} i \textit{tagata i tua}.’ ([They] think rural [literal - back] people are not important - RT3.) This way of thinking appeared to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where rural students and teachers deemed themselves as less valued.

\textsuperscript{89} In the late 1980s some classes in Malifa Compound schools exceeded 60 students. Problems with overcrowding continued through the 1990s. At the end of 2002, Malifa Compound schools were closed and students dispersed to upgraded schools within the wider Apia area. Subsequently, a new school called Apia Primary School has been reopened at the Malifa Compound.

\textsuperscript{90} A significantly greater part of instruction time in town schools was in English. This was especially evident in A classes (i.e. top stream). In many instances teachers disregarded MESC guidelines as to the amount of time spent using English/Samoan as the medium of instruction. Aware that external exams were set in English (excepting the Samoan paper), teachers believed that teaching in English would enhance students’ performance in exams.
Participants raised a number of other reasons why rural families might opt to send their primary-aged children to school in Apia. These included: a) convenience (e.g. child accompanied a parent who worked in Apia); b) dissatisfaction about hidden costs associated with rural schooling; c) dissatisfaction about greater use of corporal punishment in rural schools; d) personal grievance with a particular teacher; e) increased likelihood that child would gain entry to a secondary school in Apia; f) maintaining face; and g) maintaining and/or seeking status. Three rural parents commented about the hidden costs of rural schooling, noting that urban students only paid a school fee. By contrast, the rural parent fed the teachers, provided food or gifts when there were visitors, paid school fees and contributed to a school fund. In some instances parents shifted a Year 7 or 8 child to a church school in Apia to ensure they gained entry to high school.⁹¹

Rural students and parents strongly linked schooling in Apia with access to money. Of the 15 respondents to the question about who might send their children to Apia, eight suggested faifeau - church ministers;⁹² ten - shopkeepers and/or business people, six - vehicle owners, seven - Apia workers, and twelve - tagata mau mea - people who have money/things. Three suggested that nowadays some people who were not wealthy might also send their children into Apia. More interesting is the suggestion that parents send their children to school in Apia to maintain face, maintain or seek status. Describing Samoan people as full of pride, a rural teacher (RT3) explained how a parent who perceives him/herself as important is affronted/ashamed when his/her child is beaten in an exam by a child from a family who they see as vaivai - lowly/weak/poor. The parent responds by moving the child to a town school.

The same teacher suggested that some parents do not want their children mixing with the village ‘riff raff’. In rural interviews, six adults believed that people who sent their children into Apia for schooling were fia tagata - people who want to be somebody, fia siou - show offs, o le fia sili, tagata fia sili, o le fia tagata maualuga - people who think they are superior or want to be higher than others. Participants’ comments are consistent with previous research that notes a constant striving for status and a high level of sensitivity to status distinctions.

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⁹¹ Students in church primary schools often had preferential access to church secondary schools.
⁹² In Samoa being a church minister in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa is a lucrative source of income. Members of the congregation contribute to the church and to their minister. Donations are publicly announced. This leads to intense competition to be seen as generous and enhance personal and family status (i.e. by giving generously).
E musu e vaai mai tagata o le nuu, o ia e maualuga ae aumai lana tama e aoga i nuu i tua ae le ave i Apia. (They don’t want the people of the village to see, they are high up, but they take their child to school in a rural village but not to Apia - RT5.)

E i ai le uiga o tagata Samoa. O tagata ua maua mea (pause), ua leai a se isì mea (pause) ua ta’u mai pei o latou ua tele tupe. Ia (pause) la ua ave latou fanau i Apia. (Samoan people have that nature. People who have lots of things [implied - access to money] [pause], there’s no other explanation [pause], it’s as if they are telling us they have lots of money. Yes [pause], that’s the reason they take their children to [school in] Apia - RP4.)

Rural students, parents and teachers recognised a range of problems associated with attending primary school in Apia. These included: a) greater costs (e.g. daily bus fare and lunch money); b) longer school day (i.e. needing to leave very early in the morning and not return until late afternoon; c) tiredness; d) increased likelihood of student absenteeism (e.g. if child has no money for bus fare and/or problems with transport); e) higher student:teacher ratio; f) dangers, distractions and bad influence of Apia; and g) not really knowing what the child is doing in Apia. Several of these concerns deserve special discussion. Parents feared that if their children attended school in Apia, they might taa - roam about (in town), meet boys, and not attend school. Parents associated Apia with inappropriate behaviour, and feared that far from the surveilling eye of parents, family and village, children might be led astray. In town, “E tele faaletonu e tupu.” (There are many things that go wrong - Rst5.) A child or teenager might:

O atu i le aoga (pause), o atu ma ofu ese i totonu o le ato aoga. Tinau le aoga, talai atu aoga, sui ofu ese, nofonofono i luga o le tali galu (sea wall). E le toe foi i le aiga (pause), sei ua lata i le po, faatoa foi. Atu atu ia, masalosalo le tina poo fea sa i ai. Ae pepelo. ... Faapea matua, e umi tele le aoga o lea faa'aoga. (Go to school (pause), go with a change of clothes in her bag. After school, she takes off her uniform, puts on some other clothes and sits on the sea wall [popular place in Apia where people gather to chat and walk]. She doesn’t go home to her family (pause), until it is night. [Then] she goes [home], and the mother wonders where she was. But she lies. ... The parent thinks that the teacher had her at school for a long, long time - Rst1.)

Shore’s (1982) analysis of space is again relevant, but in this instance the centre is relocated to the village and Apia becomes periphery, dark and not to be trusted. As children move further and further from the centre (in this instance the village), two issues emerge. Firstly, actions become more and more difficult to observe (in part due to the distance and in part due
to the relative anonymity of Apia). Secondly, in Apia authority and rules about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour are less clear-cut. “In the village the matai establish rules, like the curfew and these make people behave. But in Apia there are no such controls. People are free to do as they like. In the village it is mamalu - dignified, but in town people do as they like. That is the difference between village life and town life” - UT6. Apia was a desirable destination “mo tagata e fia faasaoloto” (for people who want to be free - Rst2). Far from the eyes of parents, extended family and other villagers, children might roam, form undesirable friendships, smoke, and use bad language. Hence, parents feel deep-seated anxiety about their children attending school in Apia.

Several teachers also raised issues about children living with Apia relations, believing that some were pologa - like slaves to their relations and that this affected their ability to do well at school. “E le tutusa le faiga o tamaiti. ... E sau e aoga i nei (i.e. Apia), ae sau auauga, e fai feau. Sa le tatau i matua ona aumai.” (The children are not treated the same [i.e. as the town relative’s own children]. ... They come for school here [in Apia], but they come and serve. They do jobs. The parents shouldn’t have sent them - UT5.) However, teachers were also aware of other families who took great care of children of rural relations.

An interesting tension emerged when parents deemed tagata maualuga - high up people or tagata mau mea - rich people in a village setting brought their children into Apia government schools. In the village, the parents’ and family’s status might be well known but in a large urban school the rural child and often their family became anonymous. The child’s status shifted. Rather than being identified as the son/daughter of successful village store owner etc., the child became yet another ‘tamaititi mai tua’ (child from the back). Metaphorically and in some cases physically the child was relocated from the centre to the periphery, from high status to low status. As noted by urban teachers, many urban children, “Ua vaai maualalo i tamaiti mai tua. E manatu faatauvaa i tamaiti mai tua. (Look down on the child from the village. They don’t think rural kids are important - UT5.)

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93 In the village context, boundaries between homes are often unmarked and/or easily passed through. Homes are more likely to be open in structure (i.e. have no external walls or have expansive window areas). There is a strong sense of one’s life being lived in the public eye. Life in Apia differs in several respects. People’s properties are generally separated from neighbours by fences or hedges and homes are more likely to be of European construction and design (i.e. not so easily looked into).
MESC efforts to promote rural schools has largely been successful. Teachers and rural parents were keen to point out that: a) all schools used the same curriculum and followed the same programme; b) rural schools had smaller classes; c) rural teachers were equally qualified; d) money was not wasted on bus fares; e) children could safely walk to school; and f) parents knew where their children were.

**Conclusion**

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, there is a tendency for some educational experts in the Pacific to describe formal education as alien to Pacific cultural values and practices. Whilst many of the structural elements of formal schooling reflect their Western origin, interview material presented in this chapter suggests that much of what happens within primary schools in Samoa is profoundly influenced by the aspirations, beliefs, values and understandings of the local community. Indeed, as noted by Fairbairn-Dunlop, from the time of early missionary contact Samoans have strongly believed that “education should support the faaSamoa system” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991: 116).

In an interesting parallel with Helu Thaman’s (1988) findings in Tonga, this chapter has shown that Samoans value primary education for pragmatic, social and moral reasons. Indeed, the three goals are not separate but deeply intertwined. All groups of participants believed that with a good education, students could find well paid employment, which would in turn enable them to meet important social obligations (e.g. look after parents), participate in traditional status-raising activities and financially support valued traditional activities (i.e. faalavelave). Rather than “alienating them from the traditional cultures” (HeluThaman 1994: 7), participants saw education as a tool to enhance valued aspects of the culture and strengthen social cohesion. The purpose of education is for children to become *poto* and/or *atamai*, implying academic/intellectual outcomes but even more importantly, social and moral outcomes.\(^94\) The *poto/atamai* child knows how to behave appropriately, displays respect,
obedience and love and will ultimately become a responsible, contributing member of society. Rather than disrupting socialisation, as suggested by Helu Thaman (ibid.), primary education is largely about socialising children into socially valued attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours.

However, parents and teachers recognised a dark and dangerous side to education. Educational success creates the possibility of greater personal agency, financial independence, autonomy from family and village affairs, and freedom from the more onerous aspects of faaSamoa. Significantly, participants recognised this, and, perhaps reflective of a deep-seated ambivalence towards aspects of faaSamoa, both valued and feared the potential of education to create greater autonomy and a more individualistic lifestyle. This fear finds some resolution in the concepts *poto* and *atamai*. If a child becomes *poto/atamai* in the fullest sense, he/she will succeed at school, but even more importantly, he/she will acquire socially valued attitudes, values, and behaviours. The *poto/atamai* child emerges from school, educated, able to find employment, yet simultaneously committed to core cultural values and willing to take on social responsibilities.

Participants recognised that a range of factors impacted on how well students did at school. However, there were significant differences in participant views, beliefs and understandings in some areas. For example, only a third of adult respondents strongly believed that a child’s *toto/gafa* - blood/lineage influenced how the child did at school. Conversely, all participants believed in the power of *faamamuaiga a le Atua* - blessings of God. A number of interesting commonalities emerged between these two beliefs. Both beliefs include the idea that:

- a person’s actions can have significant consequences on the lives of their children and their children’s children;
- actions distant in time and space can impact on the here and now;
- actions that appear to have no logical connection (i.e. have no visible causal link from a Western perspective) can impact on the lives of significant others;
- a child is an intimate extension of their family rather than a separate entity;
- when relationships are in order (i.e. when people *teu le va* - tidy/put in order the space/relationship by showing deference towards elders, obeying and serving groups.” (Helu Thaman 1991: 4). As in this study, Helu Thaman also found that intellectual development was seen as only part of being a being a *poto* person.
willingly, and are honest in their work and relationships) people’s lives and the lives of their children will be blessed. Conversely, when relationships are not in order, hardships, problems, sickness and misfortune result.

Students, parents and teachers recognised that children’s home environments impacted on how children did at primary school. Participants talked extensively about material differences between families. Frequently adults recognised links between economic, educational and social status and how each impacted in subtle ways on the lives of children. Again interesting tensions emerged between previously held beliefs, values and understandings, changing socioeconomic contexts, new experiences and ways of viewing the world.

In this chapter, I have suggested that the beliefs, values, and understandings people hold impact in subtle ways in how they feel about themselves, how they perceive others, how they go about interacting with each other and how they go about being a student or teacher. For example, if a child from a vaivai - weak, faatauva'a - lowly family believes that a person’s toto - blood determines how well they do at school, the child may see little purpose in trying hard or attending school. Similarly, the teacher may feel that his or her input will make little difference to how the student does. This chapter provides insight into what Samoan students, parents and teachers see as the purpose of education, what they wish students to learn at school, why children differ in the abilities and achievements and what factors affect their progress. The following chapter looks at student, parent, and teacher understandings about how children learn and what is ‘good’ teaching.
Chapter Three: Understanding Learning and Teaching

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first two sections explore student, parent, and teacher perspectives on how children learn, and what makes a person a good or bad teacher. The third section gives a descriptive overview of teaching practice in fieldwork schools. This section looks at how teachers go about their work and how students go about learning in primary classrooms. The fourth section focuses on understanding teaching practice. In this section, I look at the relationship between the different aspects of school and the relationship between what happens in school and the wider sociocultural context. Finally, in the conclusion, I revisit key points and suggest that any discussion on education in Samoa must take into account the wider global context.

How children learn

Responses to the question, ‘How do children learn?’ fell into two broad categories. The two categories closely aligned with the already discussed stands of poto/atamai. One group of responses related to that aspect of poto/atamai to do with the intellect, learning, task accomplishment and academic success. The second group of responses related to the moral strand of poto/atamai. However, in participants’ minds the two strands were not unconnected. Rather, as discussed later in Chapter Six, participants believed that an academically successful child embodied socially valued, moral traits. Reflective of this, the poto/atamai child was consistently described as toaga - hardworking, filemu - quiet, faaaloalo - respectful, usitai - obedient and faalogo - attentive.

All of the twenty-eight respondents in this section gave multiple suggestions as to what children should do in order to achieve better results at school. By contrast only thirteen respondents included ideas that related to the teacher. The enormous imbalance towards the student is consistent with the earlier observation that students are seen as primarily
responsible for their own academic success or failure. These and other ideas about how children learn are explored in this section.

Classroom-based learning strategies that help children learn and become poto/atamai

Students, parents and teachers identified a range of classroom strategies a child might use in order to learn and become poto/atamai. Almost all focused on the importance of faalogo in the sense of listening or attending to the teacher. "O le faalogo i le faiaga le mea la e fai mai. Aua le pisa" (By listening to what the teacher is saying. Don’t make a noise - Ust 5). The student then elaborated saying that some children do not listen and do not memorise what the teacher says and when it comes to exams they do not know what to write down. Likewise parents were equally clear that children failed exams because: "Ua fai mai le faiaga, ua tautala le gutu, ae le faalogo lelei taliga. Sau loa le suega ua le itoa pe o le a le mea o le a tusi, aua, ua faalogogata" (The teacher speaks, but [the child] is talking, but not using their ears to listen carefully. When the exam comes, they don’t know what to write down, because they were disobedient [literal meaning - had difficulty hearing] - RP1). Participants believed that a child would learn: "O le faalogo i le faiaga. A alu Iou mafaufau i le mea la ejai atu, e vave ona pue." (By listening to the teacher. If your mind is on what is being said, you quickly catch on - Ust4.)

Students also focused on the importance of looking. In some instances respondents linked looking and listening. "Ou te vaai lelei i le faiaga i le mea la e fai mai, ma ana tala, ma ana actions la e faatino mai. O ia mea, e vave ona pue e tamaiti aoga" (I look/watch carefully what the teacher is doing/showing, and what she is saying, and the actions she is making. With those things, children quickly catch on - Ust1). Likewise a rural parent stated, "A faalogo i le faiaga ma vaai mea la e fai mai, e vave le pue" (If one listens to the teacher and looks at what they are showing, [the child] will quickly catch on - RP1). The parent then adds that the bad child will not learn because, "O le le faalogo ma le le tilotilo" (He/she does not listen, and does not look - RP1). In the preceding quotes, faalogo - listen and tilotilo/vaai - look/watch were linked with the idea of pue. Pratt (1912: 256) defines pue as “to seize, to catch hold of” and Allardice (1985: 59) defines pue as “catch, clutch, grasp, arrest, capture, take a photo.” Each meaning assumes a human actor and an object that in the process of being pue - seized/caught/grasped/photographed becomes, at least temporarily, a possession: a possession that at a later date is ideally recalled by the student in an exam/test.
The emphasis on looking and listening is consistent with literature on: a) traditional pedagogies; b) contemporary informal learning; and c) participant understandings about how children learn out of school. Prior to the introduction of formal education, children primarily mastered practical tasks and social skills through observation and participation in real life contexts (Galo 1966; Tavana 1994; Tuia 1999). Equally important, children gained important social and cultural knowledge through listening as in traditional fagogo - storytelling (Tuia 1999; Tupua Tamasese Efi 2003). Working in the 1980s in the village of Falefa, Ochs found that “Samoans rely heavily on repeated, often passive, observation of behaviour as a means of transmitting and acquiring knowledge and skills” (1988: 147). In a more recent study, Odden and Rochet conclude that “observational learning is both a pervasive and potent mode of social learning in the Samoan context” (2004: 39). Likewise Schoeffel and Meleisea (1996), working with a largely Samoan sample in New Zealand, found that Pacific Island children were conditioned to passive learning, with an emphasis on observation and listening. Vaipae (1999) found that learning was seldom accompanied by verbal instruction. Instead, adults modelled, whilst children observed and then attempted.

Interview responses confirm and extend these perspectives. When asked the best way to teach a child a new skill at home, almost all rural and urban students and parents focused on the importance of observation and practice. Only a third referred to listening.95

O le tama ititi etino u, e vave ona pue ma lona iloa. ‘Sau e tilotilo i le mea lea. (...) inaudible) ... tilotilo ma le faamaoni. Aua le taalo. Faaaoga lou mafaufau ma vaai mai i i. Ona iloa lea fai. Ta fai atu, ‘Sau, tago e fai’. (The child who is very committed/focused quickly catches on and understands! learns. [The parent explains what she would say to her child]. ‘Come and look at this. ... [inaudible] ... Look with honesty. Don’t play. Use your mind and look here.’ Then she will know what to do. Then you say to her, ‘Come and do it yourself’ - RP6.)

The parent then elaborates that if they do not do it well she tells them to watch again. She concludes that children learn through watching and doing, watching and doing, watching and doing and that this technique works for weaving, schoolwork, and learning how to read the Bible. Several students and parents added to their response the idea of sitting beside or being physically close to the person modelling the desired skill. “A vave a (pause) la ta pue?

95 The surprisingly small number may in part be because, when asking how to go about teaching or learning a new skill at home, I gave the example of weaving or making an umu – earth oven, to some participants.
Tilotilo, nofo i le tafatafa o matua, tilotilo, faataitai i le lalagaina o le fala ma mea faapena. E vave la ta pue.” (To quickly learn/catch on? Look, sit/be at the side of [my] parents, look, imitate/practise weaving the mat and things like that. One quickly learns - Rst6.)

Analysis of interview material is consistent with the view that parents and caregivers take a relatively passive, non-interventionist approach to children’s learning (Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Odden and Rochat 2004) and that children often acquire new skills and important social knowledge without explicit verbal instruction (Vaipae 1999; Odden and Rochat 2004). Indeed in one interview, a rural parent went to great lengths to explain that she had not taught her 13-year-old daughter how to weave. Rather, the daughter chose to sit beside her and watch. Neither, did she explicitly tell her daughter what to do. “O lana tilotilo la, ua mafai ai ona faatino le mea lea.” (It was by watching that she can do this thing - RP4.) Only three respondents (two students and one parent) made reference to explicit verbal instruction. An academically able rural student explained that:

I watched them. I imitated them. I watch (sic) my mother do it and when I try, I don’t know how to do it. So my mother held my hand and said, ‘Do it like this and this,’ and when I had finished, I know how to do it (sic) - Rst5.

Two town students stated that they would initially watch and try and if they did not understand, they would ask, listen to the explanation, watch and try again.

Four rural participants (two students and two parents) talked about an adult modelling a new skill, step-by-step, sometimes taking their hand and physically guiding them. This contrasts with Odden’s claim (2004) that during his doctorate fieldwork, he observed no instance of a parent explicitly explaining to a child how to carry out a task. One of the parents believed strongly that modelling and explaining a task supported school-based learning. Speaking in reference to her daughter, she stated:

Ta te tago e faataitai ia i feau faaSamoaso, pei o le lalaga o le fala, o le ato, faiga o mea ai. Faataitai ia i le faiga ma aoao i ai. Tutusa la, o maua o matua, e maua mai ai le faataitaiga ma le malamalama. la sau i totou o le aoga, la e ala ai le mafaufau i mea la e fai. (I take and show her Samoan tasks, like weaving a mat, a basket, cooking food. Guide her how to do it and teach her. It’s like, we two parents have the skill and understanding. When [she] comes to school, the mind is awake [implied - ready] for things they do - RP2.)

Odden and Rochat (2004) conclude that children generally take on voluntary, casual and periphery roles when engaged in observational learning. Yet, they note that in this peripheral,
observational role, children successfully master an array of important tasks within Samoan society and even more importantly acquire knowledge and understanding about relatively complex social phenomena like the *matai*- chiefly system. The authors conclude that their research in Samoa calls into question the theoretical dominance of the participatory learning model and its assumption that children primarily learn in social contexts through and by a process of active engagement.\textsuperscript{96}

Students suggested a range of other school-based strategies that they believed assisted them in their learning. These included: copying off the blackboard (6 of 12 responses); studying/reading their exercise books (9); reading books (5); and using their mind (2). Students strongly believed that copying work from the board helped them learn.

\begin{quote}
*E aoga lava, aua o le Social Studies, e leai ni mea e te tali. E le o i ai ni questions. O notes e tusi e le faiaoga i huga o le laupapa, ona kopi la ia i lalo. A oo i le taimi o exams, faapea la, o taeao exams, e alu atu oe e faitau au notes sa kopi. E ave i le fale e aaoa ai au notes. Tetele notes. (It’s useful [reference to copying notes from the blackboard], because for Social Studies, there’s nothing to answer. There are no questions. [Just] notes the teacher writes up on the blackboard that you copy down. When it gets to exam time, like, tomorrow is exams, you go and read your notes that you copied down. You take it home and study your notes. Lots of huge notes - Ust3.)* 
\end{quote}

In upper primary classes, students often had page upon page of copied Social Studies and Science notes in their exercise books. (In many instances, these notes had been copied by the teacher directly from the scheme on to the board.) As noted by the urban student above, copied notes became an important resource for students in an educational system driven by frequent testing and where there are often no text or resource books. For the student, it provided revision material, reading material in English, and something tangible they could repeatedly revisit in the hope of mastery. Indeed, rural and urban students and parents strongly believed that students became *poto/atamai* and achieved well at school through revising their notes. In participants’ minds, teachers imparted knowledge to children, who transferred that knowledge to their exercise books. The conscientious child studied hard, revised their notes, and when examined, recalled what they had learnt. Having copied the work from the board a good student would *"Alu atu i le fale e a’a ai"* (Go home and study it - Rst3).

\textsuperscript{96} In particular Odden and Rochat (2004) challenge Vgotsky’s (1986) theory that children learn best through active participation in socially scaffolded activities with significant others.
Students also recognised the importance of reading books written in English. On several occasions, students stated that clever students were always good readers. Closely linked to the belief that reading in English helped a student do well at school was the recognition that upper primary and secondary exams were all in English. A small proportion of students (2 of 12) talked about the importance of understanding their classwork.

Participants put significantly less emphasis on what teachers might do to help children learn. Seven (7 of 28) suggested specific teaching strategies. These included, giving a careful oral introduction (2), adapting teaching to students’ ability (3), teaching in a way that students readily understood (2), using a variety of teaching methods (2), and having resources/hands-on activities for students (3). Not surprisingly, teachers gave almost all responses relating to teacher practice. Participants also made general references to the role of the teacher in student learning. Several teachers described themselves as the nursemaid/trainer/rearer of a child’s brain. When explaining the importance of her role an urban teacher stated:

It is very special to me - because this is the beginning. O le faafaileleiga o fai at o tamaiti. (The rearer/nurturer of children’s brains. That’s the reason it’s so special - UT1.)

Several used a similar image of the teacher being like an autu - foundation/cause of/basis of a child’s development. “Pei o le faiaoga o le autu lena o tamaiti. O ia na te fa'amalamaiana ma tufa uma ni manatu na malamalama ai, i tamaiti.” (It’s like the teacher is the foundation/cause/basis of the child. She [the teacher] explains and gives all the ideas/thoughts that she understands to the child - RP2.)

**Socially valued behaviours and personal attributes that help a child learn and become a poto/atamai person**

Students and parents believed that prayer helped children learn and succeed at school. However, several went to great lengths to explain that prayer by itself was not enough. A

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97 The language used in exams in primary schools, varied pending student level and individual school policy. However, by upper primary level all subjects were assessed in English except Samoan.

98 Allardice (1985: 16) defines faafaileleina as “train properly, nurse,” whilst Pratt (1912: 85) defines faafaile as “to nurse an infant but not to suckle it.”

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student needed to pray and work hard. Only then would the all-knowing God intervene and assist them in their work.

E te alu e fai. Fai faalelei mea aoga. Faalogo lelei i le faiaoga. Ia foai mai e le Atua le poto ia te oe. E leai se mea lilo i le Atua. E silafia mea uma e le Atua. (Go and do it. Do your schoolwork properly. Listen carefully to the teacher. So that God will give you the cleverness/intelligence. Nothing is hidden from God. God knows everything - Rst1.)

Having worked hard the student should pray to God.

E fesoasoani mai i suega. Ia foai mai e le Atua sina malosi ma le malamalama ia te au, i le suega o le a fai... Ia faafagofie mai mataupu. Faifai ia u tatalo, ua te i lava ua iloa. Ua faifagofie mai. Tuu mafaufau i mea sa fai mulimuli. Vave le alu o le mafaufau. (Help me in exams. For God to give me strength and understanding in the coming exam. ... To make the subject easy. If I pray, suddenly I know/understand. It becomes easy. I begin to remember things learnt in the past. The mind works quickly.)

The student later adds:

A le faalogo i le faiaoga, ma fai se tatalo i le Atua e fesoasoani mai i le suega o le a fai, e le taitai maua se tulaga. (If you don’t listen to the teacher, and pray to God to help with the upcoming exam, there’s no way you’ll get a place [implied meaning - first, second or third place] - Rst4.)

As well as prayer, participants often used the expression, ‘tumau le agaga i le Alii’ - for one’s soul/spirit to stand firm/believe in God. In other contexts, participants talked extensively about the importance of parents working hard, praying, going to church and giving generously to the church and its minister. Several closely interrelated ideas emerged from these responses. Firstly, God was seen as the source of the state of being potolatamai, and could if He so wished bestow the gift of potolatamai on people. “O le atamai poo le poto, o le meaalofoa a le Alii” (Cleverness/intelligence/wisdom are the gift of God - UP5). However, man on his part had to work hard, live a good Christian life and pray. “E tuu i le tagata e sogasoga. O le sogasoga ma le tatalo i le Ali.” (He gives it to the person who perseveres. Perseveres and prays to the Lord - UP5). However, God does not restrict or limit his gift to the hard-working individual. Rather, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the gift of potolatamai is passed on to one’s children. Consistent with the idea that a person’s identity is intimately linked to his/her family, God’s generosity extends beyond the hardworking person to include his/her offspring. The gift of potolatamai and academic success is transferred from the toaga - hardworking, loto alofa – kind hearted/generous, faamaoni - honest parent to their children.
Over two-thirds of participants believed that a child would do well at school if they were toaga - conscientious/hardworking. Participants' responses indicated an array of meanings and contexts associated with the concept toaga. Again these meanings and contexts closely aligned with the two strands of poto/atamai (i.e. academic/intellectual/ skilled and moral/social). Firstly, participants believed that:

*E ala ona popoto isi tamaiti ona la e toaga e fai latou mea aoga.* (The way that children become poto/clever/do well at school is because they are conscientious about doing their school work - Ust1.)

*E mafua (pause), a toaga le tamaititi ia, e a' o ana mea aoga, e maua le poto, ae o le tamaititi i le toaga e le maua se poto.* (The cause is [pause], if the child is toaga, they study their schoolwork and become poto, but the child who is not toaga will not become poto - Rst6.)

Students, parents and teachers used a range of adjectives to describe toaga behaviours associated with schoolwork. The toaga child would sogasoga - persevere/persist with their work, and finau - strive. They were tino u - determined, naunau - eager, matua fuli i mea aoga - absolutely committed [turned] to their schoolwork, and o le le malolo - did not rest. This perception of the toaga child (i.e. one that displays determination and resoluteness) stands in stark contrast to the already discussed vaivai - academically weak child, who was sometimes described as lacking personal will, love and moral commitment.

Students, teachers and parents also referred to the idea that the toaga child would always endeavour to come to school.

*E toaga i le aoga, o lona uiga o aso uma lava e te aoga ai. E le tuai. E le taitai tuu le aoga. Tiga ona ma'i, e sau lava. O le tamaititi lena e te iloa, o le tamaititi atamai.* (If you are conscientious about school, that means that you come to school everyday. You are not late. You do not leave. Even if you are sick you still come. You know that the child like that is an atamai child - RT6.)

Implicit in these responses is the idea that in the physical act of attending school, children become poto/atamai. This idea appears to link into the earlier-mentioned idea that when a person carries out a required behaviour, they simultaneously acquire the desired outcome.

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99 Pratt (1912: 333) defines toaga as ‘to be earnest in doing things’ and Allardice (1985: 87) as “zealous” and/or “diligent”. Twenty-one of twenty-eight respondents suggested that children would do well at school and become poto/atamai.
Thus, teachers and students placed great emphasis on children attending school, laying their work out exactly as prescribed and copying it down in full.

The second strand of *toaga* is more general in focus. The *toaga* child is generally hardworking, responsible and helpful. When the teacher leaves the room, they use their time wisely and look about for ways to help.

*O le toaga - e le faatoomu i totonu o le potu. E toaga ia e teu. Vaai atu i api na faaletomu, e oso e teu. Vaai atu i le laulau, vaai atu i le laupapa. Aua ne'i i ai se lapisi. Tasi na uiga o le toaga. (Toaga - you don't tell them what to do in the classroom. They are conscientious about tidying. They see that the exercise books are untidy and jump up and tidy them. They see the table, they see the blackboard [implied - needs tidying/cleaning]. There should be no rubbish. That's one kind of toaga - RT6.)*

Furthermore *toaga* behaviours were not restricted to school. According to a rural parent and student:

*E le faapea, nao o le aoga. E maua foi le atamai i le alu atu i le faite e fai feau. E ala ai le mafaufau. Ia maua loa le potu ma le atamai. (But it's not like, only school. You also become atamai by going home and helping with jobs. It wakes up the mind. You become poto and atamai - RP1.)*

*E mafai foi ona ave le toaga mo se (pause), o le tagata gaue. Pe a toaga e alu i le maumaga. (Student gives example). 'Toaga si o' ¡ atalii e alu i uqa i le maumaga.' (You can also use the word toaga for the person who works hard. Like being conscientious about going to the plantation. [Student then gives an example]. 'My dear son is conscientious about going inland to the plantation' - Rst5.)*

Several interesting threads emerge from these excerpts. Firstly, *toaga* (like *poto*) behaviours are related across different contexts through the individual. The child who is *toaga* - conscientious at home is likely to be conscientious at school. Secondly, students, parents and teachers believed that despite the dislocation in time and space, *toaga* behaviour in the sense of willingness to do chores thoroughly at home or work hard at the plantation directly impacted on how well a child did at school. As stated by the parent above, you became *poto* by helping.

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*poto* if they were *toaga*. A further seven focused on the idea of a child needing to *taumafai/talai* - try. When responses are combined, all students, parents, and teachers referred to *toaga* and/or the need to try hard.
Closely related to the moral dimensions of *toaga*, students, parents and teachers believed that being obedient (11 responses), helpful at home (6), showing appropriate behaviour (11) and having a happy, willing disposition (5) helped a child do well at school. The emphasis on obedience is consistent with the wider cultural focus on respect and deference towards people of higher status (i.e. behaviours a child should show towards the adult teacher). Furthermore it is consistent with classroom pedagogies. Rural and urban parents in particular, expressed the belief that the child who does not obey does not learn.

*Atili ai Iona vaivai ona o le le usitai i le faatonuga sa fai. Ma o le tamaitiiti e usitai, o le tamaitiiti na, e ala foi lona mafaufau. A fai atu nei, e alu e fai le mea lea, poo o le a le tele o mea ta te fai atu e fai, e lē mafai ona misi le alu e fai mea uma. Ta te iloa, o le tamaitiiti ua ala lona mafaufau. ... E tatau ona aoao ina ia usitai i le faiaga, ia malamalama lelei. Aua, a usitai ma faalogo lelei e malamalama foi. (They are even weaker because they do not obey the instruction they are given. But the child, who is obedient, is the child whose mind is awake. If you tell them to go and do something, no matter how big the task you give them, there's no way they won't do it completely. You can easily tell the child whose mind is awake. ... [Children] should be taught to obey the teacher, in order to understand. Because if they are obedient and attentive/listen carefully they will also understand - RP6.)*

Again the importance of obedience is not confined to the classroom. Participants believed that the child who is obedient to their parents and elders at home would also become *poto*. On several occasions, teachers and parents extended the oft quoted biblical expression, *'O le mata'u i le Atua, o le amataga o le poto'* - Fear/awe [implying willingness to comply/obey] of God is the beginning of wisdom, to include children's relationship with adults. *'O le ava i matua ma le usitai o le amataga lea o le poto. O le upu e ave i fanau'* (Respect for parents and obedience are the beginning of *poto* - wisdom. The saying that is given to children - RP6).

Participants made frequent links between the concept *usitai* - obedience and *faalogo* - to attend/to listen. Of the twenty respondents who stated that children learn by *faalogo* - attending/listening, over half linked *faalogo* with obedience. Children who were *faalogo* put aside what they wanted to do and instead did as instructed.

*E aoao mai le faiaga (pause). Faalogo lelei i le faiaga ma aua le fai atu le faiaga ae fai lava mea e loto i ai tamaiti. (The teacher is teaching [pause]. Listen/attend carefully to the teacher and don't let it happen that the teacher gives an instruction and the children do whatever they like - Rst4.)*

*O le mea ua poto isi tamaiti, aua, la e faalogo. ... Ae o isi tamaiti, a fai atu le faiaga, e fai lava le mea e mananao ai tamaiti ia. (The reason why some children*
are poto is that they listen/are attentive. But some children, when the teacher tells them something they just keep on doing whatever they want - Rst5.)

The word faalogo is linguistically and conceptually linked to the idea of obedience. On completion of interviews, I asked several Samoan colleagues about the relationship between the words faalogo and usitai. In each case, they believed that whereas faalogo is superficially taken to mean listen or attend; on a deeper level it implies obedience. Significantly, the relatively dated Pratt dictionary (1912) gives “to hear” and “to obey” as meanings for faalogo. Reflecting this link, the word faalogogata – disobedient, when taken back to its roots, means to have difficulty (suffix – gata) hearing, listening or attending. Students, parents, and teachers were adamant that children needed to listen and obey in order to learn.

E taua le usitai ma le faalogo. O le faalogo ma le usitai i le faiaoga. A le faalogo le tamaititi ma usitai i le faiaoga e le maua se mea lelei. E le maua e ia le poto. (It’s important to obey and attend/listen. To attend/listen and obey the teacher. If the child does not listen and does not obey the teacher, they’ll not get anything worthwhile. They won’t become poto - UP1.)

Ia, o le anala o le usitai, o le faalogo i le faiaoga. I le mea la e tautila atu e le faiaoga. Ina ia maua le poto. Pei la (pause), o le taimi o mataupu la e fai atu e le faiaoga. E tatau la ia, ona ia faalogo ma usitai i le mataupu la e fai e le faiaoga. (Yes, the way is obedience, listen to the teacher. To the thing that teacher is talking about. So that you become poto. Like [pause], the time when the teacher is teaching a subject. You should attend/listen and obey the subject that the teacher is doing - Ust1.)

Again, closely related to the idea of obedience, five participants suggested that children who are willing, eager and happy in their disposition will quickly learn. Again implied in the idea of willingness and happiness, is the idea of compliance. The willing child quickly and happily carries out the wishes of an adult.

O le tamaititi e fia maua le poto ma le atamai e fiafa e fai mea aoga. Ae o le tamaititi e le fia maua le poto ma le atamai, a fai atu le faiaoga mea e fai mai le laupapa, e le faalogo. Tamaititi la lena e ta’ua e valea. (The child who wants to become poto and atamai is happy to do school work. But the child who does not want to be poto or atamai, when the teacher tells them what to do from the blackboard, they do not listen. A child like that is called stupid - Rst1.)

Participants also believed that the child who resists and is overcome with emotion cannot learn effectively. Resistant and musu - unwilling behaviours are strongly disapproved of in Samoa and, as noted by Mageo (1998), are often met with intensification of punishment. Both adults and children recognised that intense emotions could block learning. Students talked about situations where feelings of ita - anger and/or ma - shame/embarrassment and
suppressed emotions shut down their willingness and ability to think and participate. Participants used the expressions 'ua lusi ai le mafaufau' - the mind/ability to think is lost, and 'ua fefiloi le mafaufau' - the mind/thinking is mixed up, to describe this experience. Using a mixture of Samoan and English, a rural student talked about a younger sibling who when teased by other children about her humble lunch began to cry. "O le mea la lea o le a tupu" (The thing that will happen), "she will cry, she keeps on crying and crying and after crying she will forget all the things (pause), the work and then she don't (sic) know how to do it. So it affects them, affects them" (Rst5). The student then reiterated how the strong feelings of shame and sadness caused her small sister to forget her schoolwork.

Likewise an urban parent argued that if his wife has a confrontation with their son in the morning and smacks the child, it is pointless sending the child to school. The child's mind would be unable to concentrate on what the teacher says. Several teachers and parents believed that children who are overcome with fear cannot learn. According to one rural teacher:

O isi tamaiti, a soona ee atu, e maua le fefe. E le mafai ona tautala mai. O isi tamaiti e le mafai ona lagona mai se mea. O isi tamaiti, a pa'o se mea, e fefe loa, ua le mafai. (Some children, if you shout at them, they are afraid. They are not able to talk. Other children, they cannot hear a thing. Other children, if something makes a noise, they become afraid, they can't do [a thing] - RT4.)

By contrast, the child who is not afraid, "E le fefe e tautala, poo o le a, pe sese pe leai. Tamaiti e le fefe, e tautala soo. E oso i mea uma. E vave le pue. E tautalatala. E vave foi le pue. E vave le faalogo" (They are not afraid to talk, whatever, [they don't care if it's] wrong or right. Children that are not afraid to talk all the time. They join in everything. They quickly catch on. They are talkative. They are also quick to understand/learn. They listen/attend quickly - UT5). However, several teachers during class observations strongly stated that some children only took notice of a teacher when they felt fefe - fear towards the adult. "A le fefe e le aaoao." (If the child is not afraid they will not learn.) "A le fefe e leai se mea e maua ai." (If they are not afraid they wont get/achieve anything). Without fear children might not be usitai - obedient, ava - respectful, faalogo - listen/attend, and therefore would not do well at school.

Finally, and again related to obedience, attentiveness and willingness to comply, participants, especially rural students and parents, believed that if children displayed appropriate behaviour they would learn, do well at school and become poto and/or atamai. The child who was lelei - good/well behaved, filemu - quiet, faamaoni - honest, ava/faaalaloalo i matua - displayed
respect to their parents, and *ava/faaaloalo i fiaoga* - displayed respect to teachers would do well at school. Consistent with this, students, parents and teachers stated that teachers should *faatonu* - instruct/guide students as to how they should behave, *faasa’osa’o* - correct inappropriate behaviour and if necessary physically discipline students.\(^{100}\)

*I Samoa e mamafa tele i le fiaoga, le vaaiia o tamaiti. E le tuu faasaoloto, aua e atili ai le leaga ma le le aoaonia mea aoga.* (In Samoa, it is important for the teacher to watch [implied - watch the behaviour of] the children. [The teacher] does not leave them to do whatever they like, because they would get worse and not learn their schoolwork - Ust3.)

*Aua a tuu saoloto, e le iloa e le tamaitiiti le fiaoga.* ... *Ma o le a leaga ai lana aoga.* (Because if you let [a child] do as they like, the child will not know the teacher [implied meaning - the child will not show respect towards the teacher]. ... And he/she will do badly at school - RT2.)

Participants reiterated the idea that only when a child’s *amio* - behaviour was appropriate could he or she readily learn. At that time a teacher could begin to focus on the curriculum. Conversely, some MESC staff felt that the emphasis on behaviour distracted teachers from teaching. Making a clever play on the words *ote* - to scold and *oti* - die/finish a senior MESC educator said, *"They otea the amio, ae oti ai the content coverage"* (They scold/correct the behaviour, but finish off [ie. don’t do] the content coverage - Edex1).

**What makes a person a good and/or poor teacher**

Twenty-nine participants responded to an open-ended question about what makes a person a good or poor teacher. In many instances ideas about what made a person a good teacher were reiterated in a negative form when discussing attributes of poor teachers. Responses fell into two broad categories. These loosely aligned with the two strands in adult beliefs about how children learn. The first group of responses related to *aspects of teaching practice*. A second and significantly larger group of responses related to a teacher’s *personal qualities and/or patterns of relating*. Differences emerged between participant groups. Teachers tended to focus on aspects of teaching practice, whilst students and parents were more concerned about

\(^{100}\) These ideas are extensively discussed in Chapter Five.
the teacher as a person and how they went about relating to students. Participant perspectives are presented separately from observations of classroom practice.

Aspects of teaching practice that made a person a good or poor teacher

Whilst most students, parents and teachers placed primary responsibility on the individual student for how well he/she did at school, teachers also believed that a good teacher could be identified by the results of his/her students (i.e. by test/exam results). Like other participants, teachers believed that the good teacher was toaga - conscientious/hardworking. However, teachers were more likely to link the concept of toaga to aspects of teaching practice. Firstly, teachers believed that the good teacher was well prepared. Several also suggested that good teachers adapted their teaching to individual children’s needs, extended the curriculum, utilised the local environment, used resources to make their lessons more interesting, gave children the opportunity to do hands-on activities, and used a variety of teaching methods. Of significance here and also noted by Esera (1996) is that teachers showed an awareness of a range of pedagogical practices and ideas but did not necessarily use them in the classroom. Some teachers noted this contradiction. As one rural teacher noted, “E ese le mea la e tautala i ai, ae ese le mea la e tupu i totonu o le potu” (What happens in the classroom is different from what they are saying - RT1). This contradiction between rhetoric and practice is explored in more detail later in the chapter.

Student and parent ideas about good teaching practice were more general and often linked back to the nature of the student-teacher interaction. The good teacher carefully explained (eleven responses) what a lesson was about. They did not merely write the lesson or activity on the board and direct students to do their work. Rather, good teachers took time to ensure that students knew what to do and how to do it. Good teachers allowed students to ask questions if they did not understand (six responses) and, if necessary, took time to re-explain the lesson. Furthermore, a good teacher would “e faamalamalama lelei le mataupu. ... Ia aoo lelei. Ma auma uma ni auala e fafaigaie ai le mataupu. Ia faigaie mo tamaitei” (explain the subject well ... In order to teach/learn well. And bring [implied meaning - use] all the methods/ways to make the subject easy. So that it’s easy for the children - RP1). By contrast the poor teacher failed to adequately explain lesson content and instructions: 

E nofonofo. Nao o le tusi i huga o le laupapa. Ia tasi le faataaitaga. Uma loa, ae le o malamalama (e tamaitei) ... inaudible section ... Sa le fesili. Mea na e le fiafia ai matou i isi faiaoga ae fiafia i isi faiaoga. ([He/She] sits/doesn’t do anything. Just
writes on the blackboard. Gives one example. When its finished [the children] don’t understand. ... [inaudible section] ... It’s forbidden to ask questions. That’s the reason we don’t like some teachers but we like others - RP1.)

_E le toaga e aoao atu. Nao le sau a, ma tusi notes i luga o le board ma alu._ ([They] are not conscientious/diligent about teaching. [They] just come and write the notes on the board and go - Ust2.)

Linked to the idea of ensuring that students understood their work, participants believed that good teachers circulated around the classroom (six responses), checked and marked students’ books (two), did not sit idly (six) and did not leave the classroom (five). One rural parent believed that her _palagi_ - European, Catholic sister had been an excellent teacher in that

_E le mafai ona alu ese le faaioaga mai a matou i taimi o soo se mataupu. ... E sau a, e taamilo i taimaiti, e check lava matou i taimi uma. Poo lelei le faiga o lea mea ma lea mea. E le mafai ona faamaianau e le Taupou Sa le taimi e vai ai aoaoga._ ([The teacher] cannot/will not leave us when we are doing different subjects. ... She comes, circles around the children, to check us all the time. To see if this and that is well done. The Sister is not able to waste school time - RP4.)

By contrast, students and parents described poor teachers as _paie_ - lazy and _pepele_ - dishonest. Rather than circling students as they worked, they sat at their desk or left the classroom.

_Nao o le sau a, fai (pause), tusitusi mea, fai i tamaiti e fai meaaoga." ... Alu ma le faia se galuega, le nofo i le potu aoga. Alu i le potu la e i ai isi faaioaga. Alu nofonofo i na. Uma, uma la ia, faatoa sau._ (They just come, do (pause), write up things [implied - school work on board], tell the students to do their schoolwork [ie. work on board]. ... He/She goes without doing any work, doesn’t stay in the classroom. Goes to the room where there are other teachers. Goes and stays/lazes about there. After a while/when everything is finished, then he/she returns - Rst2.)

Sometimes teachers instructed students to lead classwork and control the class during their absence.

Some participants believed that poor teachers showed little interest in academically weak students or students from lowly and/or poor families. 101 By contrast, the good teacher treated all children the same, did not _tiai_ - give up [literal meaning - throw away] weak students and did not put them down. In town schools, several parents and one student believed that not all

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101 The idea that some teachers treat some groups of students differently is explored in Chapter Four and Chapter Six.
teachers were well-educated and knowledgable. Several parents noted that some teachers used incorrect English. One student, a son of a teacher, said that one of his teachers was poor because, “Pei e vaivai le mafaufau o le fataoga” - It’s as if the teacher’s thinking/mind is weak [implied meaning - it’s as if the teacher is a bit dumb/stupid] - Ust3). This attitude was clearly visible in urban schools. In some instances, students and their parents perceived themselves as of higher social status, worldlier, better travelled and educated than their teachers. Such an attitude was evident in the increasing number of parents who challenged the authority of teachers. As described in Chapter Five, some parents no longer accepted the right of teachers to physically discipline their children. Sometimes parents queried aspects of classroom teaching and/or work sent home. Increasingly, this cross-section of parents sought alternative schooling for their children in the private sector.

Personal qualities and patterns of relationships that made a person a good and/or poor teacher

Teachers and parents and several urban students described good teachers as toaga - committed/conscientious/diligent. In many instances participants used toaga to prefix aspects of teaching. For example, “E toaga e vaai api a tamaiti, aoao atu, ma fesili poo o le a le mea e le o malamalama ai .... Toaga e aoao atu mataupu e le o malamalama ai tamaiti” (They are conscientious/diligent about looking at [checking] the children’s exercise books, instructing/teaching, and asking if there is anything [they] do not understand ... Conscientious about teaching subjects that the children do not understand - Ust2). Several elaborated that the toaga teacher would “E faia lona tiute” (Do his job [literal - duty] - UP4 and RT2). Conversely, students and parents described poor teachers as le toaga - not conscientious, lazy and/or not honest in their work. The lazy teacher instructed students to do their work from the board and then went outside for a smoke, rest or chat. Such a teacher was, “E le tino u i lana vasega. E fai mea pepelo. Nao o le fia uma ona fai mea a tamaiti (pause), alu loa i le potu o le isi fataoga (pause), talanoa Sau. Ote, ote” (Not really committed to his/her class. [He/She] does things dishonestly. [He/She] only wants to finish the children’s things (pause), go straight to the room of another teacher (pause), talk. Come back. Scold, scold - Rst2).

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102 The word ū is defined by Allardice (1985: 95) as “hold fast, grip” and Pratt (1912: 62) as “to bite”. The phrase tino ū is commonly used to imply commitment towards an endeavour.
A teacher demonstrated his commitment in a number of ways. Firstly, a hard-working teacher turned up at school each day and was not late (five responses). They did not leave the room and go and chat in another teacher's classroom (five), nor did they merely sit. Rather the good teacher was active (six) and circulated around the room (six). Several students suggested that good teachers worked quickly and that the speed of a teacher determined the speed in which students acquired new knowledge. The slow teacher deadened students' minds. "A vave le minoi a le faiaoga e vave foi le pue e tamaiti. A faapea e telegese lava le minoi a le faiaoga - pei e tasi se itula e tusi ai se mea - o le mea lena e pe ai le mafauau o le tamaiti." (If the teacher moves quickly, the children will quickly catch [the lesson] /understand. But if the teacher is very slow - like one hour to write something - that will cause the child's mind to die - Ust1.)

By far the greatest number of participants focused on the quality of the student-teacher relationship. The good teacher used a gentle voice (19 responses). She/He had a kind face or disposition, was patient and encouraging (11). The gentle teacher endeavoured to establish a close relationship with his/her students, whereas the poor teacher was cruel or mean (ten). Students and parents described the good teacher as malu - gentle, alofa - loving, and willing to faapeleina tamaiti - endear/treat children tenderly. When the good teacher spoke his/her voice was; "E lelei lona leo. Fiafia tamaiti e omai i aso uma. E manaia lona uiga faaalia. E mata ataata." (He/She has a nice voice. The children are happy to come [to school] every day. He/She has a nice/kindly manner. He/She has a cheerful face - UT2.) By contrast the poor teacher was sau - cruel or saunoa - unkind/harsh, might avaavau - use a loud, harsh, rough way of speaking, might soona ee - shout all the time, use upu mamafa - harsh language [literally meaning - heavy words] or swear at the students.

Ona o isi faiaoga, e faasauaonoa i la'u vaai. E le gata i la'u vaai atu i faiaoga i inei. (Because some teachers are from my perspective unkind/harsh. Not only teachers I see here - UP4.)

O isi faiaoga e faasaua. E le taitai alofa i tamaiti. ... O le ote, po'o lafo upu mamafa, ma soona sasa latou i mea (pause), tusa ma sou tusi mai. E ee i tamaiti. (Some teachers are cruel. They don't love their students at all. ... They scold or use harsh language, and hit them all the time for (pause), like for being late. They shout/scream at children - Rst1.)
Participants were divided about the appropriateness of teachers hitting students. Some stated that good teachers seldom hit children whereas poor teachers hit too much (11 responses). Another group believed that a good teacher would hit a child if necessary. However, all consistently emphasised the idea that teachers needed to be measured about how and when they hit a child. “E lelei foi le sasa. Ae e le o le matuā sasa, e matuā leaga ai le tino. Sasa ia iloa le tamaititi le mea ua sese.” (It’s good to hit too. But not really hitting hard, so that the body is badly injured. Hit so that the child knows that what he/she is doing is wrong - UP3.) Closely linked to the idea that children needed physical discipline, was the belief that good teachers established strong control over their class by faatonu - directing/guiding/ordering/instructing students (seven responses.) The teacher who did not faatonu his/her students did not care about them.

Students were keenly attuned to more subtle areas of the student-teacher relationship. Two urban students described bad teachers as people who forced students to do things against their will. In each case, the students referred to teachers who had put pressure on them and their classmates to buy food items or ponesi - scratchie tickets. Reflective of the strong cultural emphasis on respect and obedience towards elders both students felt compelled to do as the teacher asked despite wishing to do otherwise. Beneath a demeanour of willingness lay deep-seated feelings of ambivalence.

An overview of teaching practice

This section includes a descriptive summary of fieldwork notes taken whilst observing in classrooms. Cumulatively, I spent six weeks in a range of classes in one rural school, one semi-rural school and two urban schools. The majority of time was spent in one rural and one urban school. Observations focused around:

- how students and teachers spent their time in the classroom;
- where students and teachers were located within the classroom;
- the nature and content of the student-teacher interactions; and
- the nature and content of student-student interactions.

103 Refer to Chapter Five, for a detailed discussion on corporal punishment in primary schools.
Class observations provided critical input into the kinds of questions asked during interviews. Conversely, time in classrooms provided opportunity to revisit interview questions in an informal context and explore links between participant understandings and the reality of the classroom. In the following section, I summarise key observations of teaching practice and link these to previous research. This section also provides a background to three areas of interest that are developed into full chapters. These are: a) student-teacher interactions; b) different perspectives on physical discipline; and c) the pervasive exam/test culture.

Like Esera (1996) and Lake (2001) I found considerable variation in teaching practice. However, despite individual differences, significant patterns emerged that are consistent with previous research. In each school, I observed instances of quality, acceptable, and poor teaching.104 In each school, there were teachers who despite limited resources and difficult circumstances, struggled to deliver a quality programme to their students. An example of such a teacher is described in Pereira (2004b). The level of commitment from some teachers was epitomised by a retired Head Teacher, who continued to teach in an unpaid capacity to enable his wife to focus on her responsibilities as Principal. For the most part, children eagerly arrived at school and stated that they enjoyed being there.

**Teacher-centred practice**

Teaching practice in Samoa has frequently been described as teacher-centred (Barrington 1968; Sutter 1980; Va’a 1987a; Dawe 1989; Moli 1993; Petana-Ioka 1994; Tavana 1994; Esera 1996; Tanielu 1997; Lake 2001). Moli observed that the most difficult issue for teachers in coming to terms with the Junior Secondary School Science curriculum was not the new content, lack of resources or poor facilities. Rather it was getting teachers to adapt their practice to “the new child-centred teaching approach” (1993: 42).

104 At recent Inservice Training (IST) workshops, trainers ascribed a range of personal and professional qualities to ‘good’ teachers. These included being; *faamaoni* - honest, *alofa* - loving, *onosai* - patient, *saliili* - searching/desiring to know, *gaahue faatasi* - good team member, *mataala* - punctual/on the ball/alert, *sogasoga/finginau/litau/punouai/toaga* - cluster of adjectives implying commitment/hard work/diligence/goal focused etc., *suesue* - committed to learning, and *fetufaai* - sharing. Trainers also referred to a range of desired pedagogical practices. Trainers emphasised that good teachers: a) were well prepared; b) endeavoured to find resources and/or ideas to supplement the curriculum; c) explained subject matter well; d) encouraged students to ask questions; e) tried to integrate different subject areas; f) recognised and accommodated differences in ability; and g) did not resort to physical punishment. (IST Inservice Workshops, Apia, 2003). Rather than impose outside ideas about what constitutes good teaching, I have chosen to work with local (albeit MESC and donor influenced) definitions. For recent definitions of Western perspectives on good pedagogical practice, refer to
Observations in fieldwork schools confirm that teachers continue to direct and determine what happens within primary classrooms. Teachers almost always initiate interactions with students (including question/answer sequences), and determine the length of the interaction and closure. Teachers determine seating arrangements and, throughout the day, largely direct and control student activity. As noted by Esera (1996), students are seldom given the opportunity to choose between activities, decide how they might approach an activity, and develop some degree of autonomy. This has several implications. Firstly, all students are generally engaged on the same task at the same time and required to approach the task in the same way. If, for example, students are writing stories, the teacher (or syllabus) determines the topic. Secondly, little or no effort is made to accommodate individual differences. The teacher (or the syllabus), rather than the student and his/her needs or interests, determines what happens, how it is done and when.

Students do, however, find spaces and opportunities to make choices. Such choices are generally discrete and ignored by teachers unless they are perceived to be disruptive. For example, when students finish a task they might talk quietly to a neighbour, play a non-obtrusive game (e.g. noughts and crosses, gang-gang ga moo), draw, or read (if there is reading material available). Students do not approach the teacher for alternative activities, do not assume the right to hurry the teacher to the next activity (i.e. the student accepts the right and authority of the teacher to determine the flow and content of the day), and do not challenge the teacher’s authority. Perhaps the most extreme examples of students’ passive acceptance of teacher direction involved students redoing tasks that they had already done. On several occasions, I observed students redoing a set of tasks (i.e. i) changing direct speech to indirect speech, ii) changing affirmative sentences to negative sentences, and iii) finding volumes of shapes) that they had done the day before. In each instance, the teacher had not prepared a new activity, and felt compelled to have the students appear busy and thus disguise his/her lack of preparation. At no time did the students question the teacher’s directive.

With the introduction of the Australian-funded Primary Education Material Project (PEMP) and ongoing teacher inservice programmes, some teachers are beginning to explore alternative practices. PEMP inservices, teacher resource booklets and student booklets encourage hands-on activities, pair and group work, and provide greater space for student choice, expression and voice. Likewise, the recent Inservice Teacher (IST) training programme actively calls for teachers to use alternative pedagogies and take into account student differences, interests and abilities when planning and teaching. However, both students and teachers shape classroom pedagogies. Demonstrating that global flows work both ways (developed → developing → developed countries/Pacific Rim → Pacific Islands → Pacific Rim) New Zealand researchers observed that Pacific students transfer familiar or culturally preferred learning styles into ‘new’ contexts. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1981), Nichol (1985) and Jones (1991) found that Pacific students in New Zealand schools often took on passive, listening roles, did not ask questions and preferred to copy teacher notes. Indeed, Pacific students influenced how teachers went about their work, and often resisted teachers’ efforts to introduce more interactive teaching methods (Jones 1991).

Teaching to collective group

Consistent with a teacher-centred pedagogy, teachers taught and related to students as a collective group. Instructions and explanations were almost always given from the front of the classroom and directed to the class as a whole. Furthermore, teachers downplayed individual achievement by offering non-specific affirmation. When a student gave a desired or correct response, teachers tended to acknowledge the response with sa’o - correct, manaia - beautiful/good or lelei - well done/good, but seldom named the student or elaborated on what had been done well. As noted by others researchers, teachers made little or no effort to accommodate individual differences (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Esera 1996; Lake 2001). The failure to accommodate difference was particularly significant given the great variation in student age and ability. For example, in Folau School, Year 1 students’ age on entry varied from four years seven months to nine

105 Over the last decade, there has been in excess of eight projects with a professional development component. These include Teacher Education Quality Improvement Project (TEQIP), Early Primary Literacy Development Project (EPLDP), Basic Education for Life Skills (BELS), Primary and Literacy Education (PALE), Augmenting Institutions for General Attainment (AIGA), Primary Education Materials Project (PEMP), Supporting Teacher Education in Pacific Schools (STEPS), and Inservice Training Project (IST project under the Education Sector Support Project). All of these projects have tried to encourage more child-centred teaching practices. For a more detailed discussion of PEMP refer to Pereira (2002a).
years four months. In Atafu School, students' age on entry varied from four years five months to seven years seven months. Extreme variations in age continued throughout the different levels of fieldwork schools.

As evidenced in SPELL (national tests conducted at Year 4 and Year 6 to identify at-risk students) and Year 8 National Examination results, there is a wide range of student achievement (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture 2003). These differences were readily apparent during school visits. For example, in Atafu School, Year 3 (i.e. seven - nine year olds) top students read Year 3 PEMP booklets in Samoan with a high level of accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Conversely, low achievers did not recognise high frequency words, letters and their associated sounds. Later when engaged in a writing task, top students completed half a page of tidy, grammatically correct, well spelt work in 30 minutes. Weak students, on the other hand, struggled to record sounds, spell high frequency words, separate out words and complete two lines.

Occasionally, teachers adapted their teaching to take into account individual and/or group differences. For example, at Vaitupu School a Year 4 teacher expected all students to read from the same story chart, but planned different activities for different groups. Several teachers at the same school had managed to scrounge sets of readers for their classrooms and tried to match students’ reading ability with appropriate texts. More frequently, teachers set the same task for all students but varied expectations about what students might complete. Occasionally, teachers suggested a simplified task for some students. Weak students used a range of strategies to cope in the classroom. They copied work from the board and left spaces to enter answers at a later date. Alternatively, weak students whispered to neighbours and/or copied neighbours’ work. These strategies were problematic, given that students were almost always seated according to recent achievement in exams. Hence, weak students sat with weak students. In one instance, a Year 7 teacher consciously placed an able student in each group and encouraged this student to interact with and support their peers. Significantly, struggling students did not approach teachers for assistance.

**Shifting locations and the importance of the blackboard**

At each school, there was an expectation that teachers would write up students' work on the blackboard before the school day began. In most rooms, the board was divided into subject areas (English structure/Wordstudy, Samoan structure/Wordstudy, Maths,
Science/Health/Social Studies) with work almost always copied directly from schemes (i.e. national curriculum documents). Before school, Head Teachers endeavoured to visit classrooms and check that teachers had prepared their boards. Throughout the day, students tended to follow a mat-desk, mat-desk sequence. (This pattern was closely paralleled by a board/teacher’s desk, board/teacher’s desk sequence by many teachers.) Sometimes these sequences were broken by pair or group activities, teachers moving around or out of the room or teachers standing/sitting in other locations. During instruction time students almost always sat on the mat, whilst teachers stood beside the board. When teachers used a PEMP resource, they sometimes repositioned themselves at a student desk or chair near the front and used the PEMP resource in much the same way that they might use the blackboard. At the board, teachers led whole-class marking of student work, explained/taught a lesson, gave examples, directed students to read aloud instructions/classwork/story, led students orally through question/answer sequences, or gave instructions as to what students were to do next.

Mat rituals: whole-class chanting, rote learning, repetition of question-answer sequences and responses

Whilst located on the mat (and sometimes at their desks), students at all levels engaged in a set of patterned behaviours. Firstly, students spent significant amounts of time chanting classwork (Petana-Ioka 1994; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esera 1996; Lake 2001). Esera describes this behaviour as students “barking at print, word call/mouthing or repeating words” (ibid.: 8) and like Lake (2001), laments that many teachers showed little interest in whether children did or did not understand the work. Rather it appears that both students and teachers believed that in the act of doing (i.e. going through the motions), children learn. One teacher educator and a second practicing teacher suggested that loud whole-class chanting served a secondary purpose, namely, performance. The loud chanting ensured that any parents in or near the school compound, as well as teachers in adjacent classrooms, could hear that the teacher was doing his/her job.

Chanting behaviours were particularly prevalent during Maths (e.g. saying tables) and Reading. Chanting behaviours are perhaps best described as an individual, part or whole class recital of school work in an often rapid, sometimes staccato (rhythmically punctuated), loud, singsong voice. There is often a sense of disengagement and/or disembodiment in the voice. A reading lesson in a Year 2 class at Folau School provides a typical example. The story, ‘O
le Faatoaga' (The Plantation), was taken from the scheme and written on a chart. The children, seated on the mat, had read the same story over several days. Irrespective of ability, all students read the story. Firstly, students read in unison, in loud, singsong voices. The teacher then identified several difficult words, modelled them and got the children to repeat them several times. Next, she selected one student, followed by a second and third student to read the story. The third and obviously weak student, struggled, and the teacher instructed the class to read with him. At the same time, the two adjacent classes were also reading/responding in unison and their voices carried intrusively through the thin hardboard walls.

Closely linked to whole-class chanting, many classes engaged in extended periods of whole-class repetition of responses and rote learning (Dawe 1989; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esera 1996; Male and Lameta 1999; Lake 2001). Whole-class repetition was heavily used as a teaching strategy in English and Samoan (structure, spelling and word study) and Maths. For example, when a Year 6 Folau teacher reviewed question tags, she got the students to repeat each correct or corrected response two, three and sometimes four times (e.g. ‘The boy went to the plantation, didn’t he?’). Likewise when a Year 4, Folau teacher worked on Word Study, she instructed her class to “Sipela arm!” (Spell arm!) The students responded collectively, shouting out “Arm, a - r - m, arm!” three times. This pattern was repeated for all the spelling words. At the same school, another teacher had her students using bottle tops to make two sets of numbers. Firstly, the students collectively counted (up to five times) how many bottle tops were in each set. Then the students created sentences using ‘less than’ or ‘more than’. Students then repeated the response (e.g. “10 e sili atu i lo 8” [10 is more than 8]) three to four times. These same patterns were repeated to varying degrees in each school.

Student-teacher relationships
At the completion of formal instruction at the board, students were usually sent to their desks to complete an activity from the board or a PEMP booklet. Sometimes students were directed to a pair or group activity and written activity. During classtime strong patterns emerged in

106 Sometimes the story is written on the board.
107 The patterns vary with teachers sometimes requiring, girls, boys, a specific group, an individual or the whole class to respond.
the way students and teachers interacted with each other. For example, often at the end of formal instruction at the board, teachers would ask students, “E i ai se fesili?” (Is there a question?), to which students almost always responded, “Leai, faafetai.” (No, thank you.) Alternatively teachers asked “Tou te malamamala?/Malamalama?” (Do you understand?/Understand?). Again students gave an almost ritualised response, “Malamalama faafetai.” ([We] understand thank you.) even when they clearly did not. These and other observations are discussed in Chapter Four. Key points are briefly summarised:

- students are often unwilling to ask teachers questions;
- students are often unwilling to approach teachers for assistance;
- there is limited one-to-one interaction between teachers and students about students’ work and learning;
- there is limited informal interaction between teachers and students;
- there is a strong focus on appropriate behaviour (regulative pedagogy);
- a small but significant number of teachers show a greater interest in some students and less interest in others;
- a small but significant number of teachers use shaming, verbal put downs and threats in the classroom;
- in many classrooms there is limited use of praise;
- and in most classrooms there is a high level of discrete and open peer interaction and cooperation.

A focus on form, presentation, following a set of steps, and getting things right (over and above understanding)

Several researchers have noted that primary teachers in Samoa place a strong emphasis on layout, neatness, and getting things right and that these objectives often take precedence over and above student understanding (Esera 1996; Tanielu 1997; Lake 2001). Students often spent an inordinate amount of time, setting their work out tidily. When students did not have necessary equipment (e.g. rulers), they borrowed and improvised rather than produce mataga - ugly work. In almost all classes, bookwork was pedantically set out. Students entered the date, instructions from the board, questions and answers in full. Students also methodically underlined and ruled off. In many classrooms, students copied corrections (e.g. for Maths, English and Samoan structure) from the board into their books. Often teachers showed little interest as to whether students understood how or why an answer was reached. Rather, it appeared that some students and teacher assumed that in the act of copying out the correct answer, students would come to know.
Whilst many teachers took time to ensure that students understood what they were doing and why, some focused on knowing a formula, following a set of steps, and getting things right. This was especially apparent in Maths in the upper levels. For example, a Year 6 teacher at Viliamu School was working on finding the volume of shapes. The lesson began with marking the previous day’s work. A significant proportion of the class had not understood what they were doing. Rather than explain/re-explain the concept of volume and how volume is found, the teacher restated the formula, did the previous day’s work on the board and instructed students to copy it into their books. Likewise, in upper levels, students were expected to add, subtract, divide and multiply fractions. Yet in many instances, students did not fully understand what fractions were. Consistent with Dawe’s (1989) observation, teachers often placed greater emphasis on speed and accuracy rather than understanding.

**Copying note and rote learning from notes**

In some classes, especially upper levels, students spent a significant amount of time copying notes from the board and/or from PEMP resources. Frequently work copied from the board had in turn been copied by teachers from curriculum documents. This was especially apparent in Year 8 in Science and Social Studies. Many Year 8 students preparing for the National Year 8 Examination found that copied notes provided a critical resource, which they could take home and study and/or learn by heart. Students at other levels referred to taking their exercise books (i.e. notes) home to study for tests and exams.

**Limited focus on the development of critical and deeper thinking**

Teaching strategies tended to encourage lower level thinking, rather than the development of deeper and critical thinking skills (Va’a 1987a; 1987b; Dawe 1989; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Esera 1996; Male and Lameta 1999; Guild 2001; Lake 2001). In fieldwork schools, students seldom asked questions or openly displayed inquiry-type behaviours. Teacher initiated question-answer sequences were, for the most part, dominated by short, lower-level thinking questions (e.g. who, what, where questions as opposed to how and why). MESC had attempted to address this. In several schools, teachers talked about using a ‘blue print’, which identified different kinds of questions (eg. set and free [open-ended] responses that took into account knowledge, understanding and application). Reflective of changing lifestyles in Apia, Va’a (ibid.) found that urban students displayed more inquiry-type behaviours. Conversely rural students displayed more conforming-type
behaviours. Significantly, Va’a found that the primary determinant of an interaction (i.e. whether inquiry or conforming) was the teacher. I suggest that five factors influenced whether students asked questions and/or displayed inquiry-type behaviours. These include: a) teacher and teacher statements/interaction patterns; b) the location of a school (urban students were more likely to engage in questioning-type behaviour); c) student achievement (A stream and high performing students were more likely to engage in questioning-type behaviour); d) the language of instruction (the use of English as a medium of instruction worked against questioning-type behaviours for many students); e) student perception of self worth (largely determined by level of achievement and family status); and f) factors beyond the school (e.g. home language/languages and interaction patterns).

Poor use of time

In many classrooms there was inefficient use of student time. According to Tanielu, “Classroom learning was an apprenticeship in passivity and an exercise in social control” (1997: 52) where children found ways to entertain themselves and pass time. This description is consistent with fieldwork observations in a significant number of classrooms. A number of factors contributed to poor use of time. Firstly, students often lacked basic resources to carry out tasks. For example, in a Year 3 class at Viliamu School, students had one ruler per five students for an individual measuring task. In another class, 6 of 27 children had no pencil. In many classrooms, students spent considerable time looking for, borrowing and sharing basic stationery items. Sometimes students did not do set work because they lacked a pencil, etc. Secondly, students invested considerable time and energy into producing work that was tidy and methodically set out. Thirdly, teachers expected students to copy out instructions and questions, as well as do the desired task. Finally, when students completed a task, there was often nothing for them to move on to. (Some teachers had a corner with teacher/student scripted stories, PEMP booklets or readers.) Students learnt to discretely entertain themselves, taking care not to draw the attention of the teacher. Two teacher educators suggested that inefficient use of school time socialised children into a pervasive malaise typical of many government departments. One referred to an attitude of “There’s another day” and found that her energy and initiative as a primary teacher had often been greeted with comments like,

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108 Government departments have recently been part of a major Australian funded project called the Institutional Strengthening Project (ISP). Objectives include greater transparency, efficiency and accountability in the public service sector (Government of Western Samoa 2000).
An alternative perspective is offered by Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991), who suggests that time is not a culturally relevant variable. Use of time varied hugely within and between classes. A stream and high achieving groups (i.e. Group One and Group Two students) produced considerably more work than low achieving students. Two factors appeared to contribute to this. Firstly, low achievers took longer to start and do tasks. Secondly, teachers often varied their expectations and demands pending their perceptions of students. Many placed minimal expectations on students they perceived as weak. Sometimes, this reflected an attitude that these students were 'maimau taimi' - a waste of time (Year 8 teacher in reference to a weak group of students in her class) and that time was more beneficially invested in students who had a chance to do well (Head Teacher comment). Students and parents offered a different perspective. Urban parents believed that better teachers got put in A stream classes and that these teachers worked harder. A significant number of students and parents believed that some teachers focused their energy on students they perceived were clever/well-to-do/high up and ignored children who were weak or faatauvaa - lowly/of little importance.

A school-wide focus on exams impacted on how teachers and students used their time. On the one hand, exams put pressure on teachers and students to maximise school time. Indeed, Year 8 teachers extended the school day in order to prepare students for the National Exam. Conversely, it could be argued that formal exams (e.g. at the end of each term or half-year) contributed to loss of teaching and learning time. In government primary schools, the school year divides into several cycles where: a) students cover 'new' material from set curriculum documents; b) students revisit and revise material in preparation for exams; c) students sit exams; and d) a post-exam space often extending over several weeks. Cumulatively, b), c), and d) eat into 'new learning' time. Furthermore, some students describe the post-exam period as 'maimau taimi' - a waste of time. Others look forward to this time, because it means they might do art, dance, songs, and sport.

Several other time-related factors impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. Firstly, many teachers did not maximise opportunities for teaching. As will be discussed in Chapter

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109 In Chapter Four, I discuss the belief that some teachers treat students differently.
Four, on completion of formal teaching at the front of the class, many teachers went straight to their desk where they sat for extended periods of time. During this time some marked student books, and/or worked on lesson plans. Whilst seated at their desk, students did not approach them for assistance and teachers seldom initiated interactions with students. When and if teachers circled around students, their interactions were more likely to relate to getting students on task rather than what students were doing (i.e. teaching/learning objectives). Secondly, a small number of teachers left their rooms for extended periods and thirdly, in some schools, teachers were slow to return to class after breaks. Some Head Teachers showed a keen awareness of these issues. Several talked about banning teachers from writing up their Weekly Plan Book during class time and banning teachers from wandering into adjacent classrooms for a chat. In two schools, Head Teachers sharply reminded teachers that the bell had gone and they ought to return to class. Both schools maintained tight time frames.

Teaching and learning are constrained by a) the curriculum and b) the classroom

Teachers almost always restricted their teaching to the national curriculum documents (Samoan, English, Maths, Social Studies and Science) and/or PEMP materials. Curriculum documents included full details of each lesson (i.e. what was to be said/taught and what students were to do). This meant that at any given point in time during the school year, teachers at the same level were teaching the same material. Teachers rarely diverged from curriculum documents or PEMP material. Indeed, as noted by Esera (1996) and Lake (2001) teachers showed an unwillingness to try new ideas and move away from the curriculum. Trainers at the recent IST (inservice) actively encouraged teachers to plan integrated units that drew on curriculum documents, PEMP resources, other texts, and teachers’ and students’ experience and knowledge. In a small number of classrooms, students engaged in art (usually a pencil drawing), singing and drama activities. Several schools set aside a special time each week for sports. Some students referred to doing art, craft, singing, dance and sport after exams were finished. During a ten-week period, I observed four instances of students doing activities beyond the classroom. For example at Atafu, Year 1 students made paper planes and

110 For example, on a Friday one hour before the school day finished at Viliamu school, I walked past nine classrooms. Three teachers were at their desk finishing their Weekly Plan (before handing it to the Head Teacher) whilst their students talked and played and three teachers were not in their rooms.

111 In two schools it was not uncommon for teachers to return to class 10-15 minutes after the bell. In the absence of a teacher, a student often took over supervision of a class. In one school, senior students were assigned to specific rooms.
flew them outside, and at Viliamu School Year 1 to 3 students watched teachers plant a

garden and discussed things plants needed to grow.

The significance of space and the relative location of bodies within a given space

In almost all classrooms, students were seated according to their achievement in recent tests

or exams. A student's location within the classroom embodied and conveyed important

messages. In most classrooms, students sat in ability groups. A common pattern is illustrated

in Figure 3. Group One and Two students are seated at the front (i.e. beside the board). Groups Three and Four sit behind them and Group Five and sometimes Six sit at the rear. In classrooms where there was insufficient furniture, the lowest performing group was placed on the floor towards the back. Seating arrangements impacted on classroom interactions. In some classrooms, books of Group One and Two students were more likely to be marked and corrected. When teachers did circulate and interact with students about their work, they were more likely to interact with students at the front. Interactions with students near the back tended to relate to getting students on task (i.e. not about a teaching/learning focus). At no time did I observe a teacher bend/crouch/squat to interact with a student on the floor about their work.

112 Sometimes Group Two sat behind Group One on the side of the classroom that faced the school malae - grassed central area. In a small number of classes students sat in rows according to their place in class. The top student sat at the front and the weakest at the rear. A small number of teachers chose to do things differently. One placed the weakest groups at the front. One let students chose where they wanted to sit and another sat an able student with each ability based group. Several teachers talked about sitting weak students (who they perceived as ulavale - cheeky, faatamala - irresponsible and/or leaga - bad), close enough to “mei atu ia latou” - jump over to them (implied meaning - keep an eye on them).
Relative positioning of bodies in the classroom also had important pedagogical implications. Positions of students relative to adults both reflected and conveyed important messages about relative rank and status. On completion of an activity, teachers tended to collect books in and mark retrospective at their desk (i.e. without the student present), mark collectively at the board or get students to line up with their work. Students in line tended to kneel, crouch and/or sit, so as to not stand at a higher level than the seated teacher. Students almost always maintained a position to the side and front of the teacher, when the teacher marked their work. Physically this made it difficult for students to see and engage in a discussion about their work. (Teachers, when marking, generally did not initiate conversations with students about their work.) When a teacher asked a student to look at their work, students took great care not to intrude on the physical space of the teacher. The significance of space in Samoa and people's bodies within space is discussed later in this chapter.
Understanding the context of teaching and learning

In this section I look at some of the factors that shape how teachers go about their work and how students go about their learning. I begin with a brief analysis of Bernstein’s (1971) theory that teaching and learning in schools is shaped by *three interdependent message systems or codes* and that these cannot be considered (or changed) in isolation from one another. I then look at how *material and physical factors* impact on the nature and quality of teaching and learning at the primary level. Under the subheading, *sociocultural context of teaching and learning*, I draw parallels between what happens in classrooms, beliefs about children and how they learn, appropriate relationships between adults and children and core cultural values, beliefs, understandings, social practices and structures. This includes a discussion on *the hidden language of space*, where I look at the significance of people’s location and what this might mean for teaching and learning.

*Interdependent message systems or codes*

Bernstein (1971) proposed that it is not possible to look at and/or change teaching practice in isolation. Rather, in the context of formal education, teaching practice is part of a wider, interdependent and internally coherent set of message systems or codes. Bernstein identified these message systems as assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy (teaching practice). Bernstein’s theory is applicable to primary education in Samoa. Present teaching practices are consistent with: a) a narrow, tightly proscribed and poorly resourced curriculum; and b) regular pencil and paper type tests and exams at all levels. The detailed curriculum documents emphasise content over and above process. Knowledge, embodied in the curriculum documents, is accessed by the teacher/expert who, consistent with present teacher-centred practices, transmits this knowledge to students who do not challenge or attempt to construct new understandings. Instead, students take and reproduce teacher-transmitted knowledge in formal, pencil and paper type tests. Such tests are for the most part multiple-choice and/or short answer and largely measure students’ ability to recall (i.e. value content over understanding). Some teachers recognised links between how they taught, the emphasis on tests/exams, the current curriculum and resourcing. When inservice trainers at an IST
workshop challenged them to be more innovative in their planning, integrate their subjects and move beyond the scheme, teachers asked how they might achieve this without adequate resources and with the present focus on exams. Year 7 and 8 teachers dared not move away from the prescribed curriculum, lest they disadvantage their students in the Year 8 National Examination.

Dependence on tightly defined and prescriptive curriculum documents and a culture of testing encouraged students to value certain learning strategies over and above others. For example, Year 8 students believed that copied teacher notes provided them with an invaluable resource for revision. Likewise, students and some teachers believed that chanting and rote repetition of facts and responses helped students memorise their work. However, the focus on pencil/paper type tests and exams (i.e. assessments that emphasise recall) discouraged the development of critical thinking and encouraged students and teachers to focus on students getting things right rather than understanding.

**Material constraints**

A lack of stationery, teaching resources, readers and library books seriously impacted on the nature and quality of teaching and learning (Howell 1986; Moli 1993; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esra 1996; Guild 2001; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a). Students lost valuable learning time finding (e.g. borrowing, sharing, etc.) basic stationery items or were unable to do set tasks. Likewise, a lack of stationery made it difficult for teachers to display students' work, create charts and make resources. Books and readers in fieldwork schools were almost always second-hand, gifted from Pacific Rim countries, dated, and inappropriate in reading age and content. This material was aptly described by one rural teacher as "O lapisi ua aumai" (Rubbish that has been brought over). Conversely, the existence of quality resources did not necessarily mean that teachers used them. Lake (2001) found science equipment and PEMP sets sitting untouched on shelves or in cupboards. Likewise, I found resources that were under-utilised or untouched.114

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113 Petana-Ioka (1994) notes a relationship between teaching methods and the emphasis on exams in secondary schools in Samoa. Pereira (2002b) looks at how the Year 8 National Exam impacts on teaching and learning in primary schools.

114 For example, several of the schools had some quality children's books. These often sat unused in a library area. Like Esra (1996), I saw no instance of a teacher choosing to read a story book to children. Some classes
Lack of resources directly impacted on teaching and learning (Howell 1986; Moli 1993; Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esera 1996; Guild 2001; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a). Without ready access to quality textbooks and/or reference books, teachers depended heavily on the five core curriculum documents and new PEMP resources. A lack of readers, textbooks and books also made it difficult for teachers to plan individual and/or group work appropriate to student ability. Instead, it encouraged teachers to teach to the class as a collective whole. Furthermore, a lack of resources contributed to inefficient use of time. On completion of tasks, students often had nothing to do (i.e. no books/readers to read and/or alternative activities). Howell (1986), when reviewing literacy instruction in primary classrooms, saw a link between the shortage and unavailability of readers and the practice of students reading in unison stories scripted by teachers on to charts or blackboards. Similarly, a team reviewing educational policies concluded that the “dependence on rote-learning is often the result of insufficient availability of resources” (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a: 19). Lack of and restricted access to readers and books also impacted on student learning. In particular, it intensified students’ dependence on the teacher and thus contributed to teacher-centred practices.

The introduction of PEMP material, including individual student booklets in core subject areas, demonstrates the power of educational materials to influence teaching practice. PEMP materials reflect and embody alternative ways of thinking about teaching and learning and thus provide ideological and material support for teachers. PEMP materials explicitly encourage teachers to vary their teaching methods (i.e. include suggestions for individualised, pair, and group work, role-play, drama, and hands on activities) and simultaneously provide the resources that enable teachers to do so. PEMP student booklets free students from their dependence on the teacher, as the sole source of information, and enable students to engage with information in a variety of forms (photos, maps, pictures, charts etc.). However, as noted by Lake (2001), whilst good resources facilitated good teaching practices, they did not necessarily ensure them. Ultimately, the key factor appeared to be the teacher.

did not visit the library, others visited irregularly and a minority went to the library on a regular basis (e.g. once a week).

113 For a detailed discussion on the impact of PEMP materials in Samoa, refer to Pereira (2002a).
Poor infrastructure also impacted on teaching and learning (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Esera 1996; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a). Most rural schools like Folau lacked phones and this made communication with the central MESC office difficult. Inadequate teaching space and furniture dramatically impacted on classroom programmes and student-teacher interactions. Due to a recent explosion in roll numbers, ten junior classes in Viliamu School shared an open hall area. In this context, loud chanting, and repetition of responses became necessary teaching strategies that enabled children to hear the desired response over and above competing sounds. As discussed later in this section, lack of furniture and the arrangement of furniture within classrooms also impacted on student-teacher interactions and the nature and quality of teaching and learning within a given area.

Finally, teacher shortage impacted on teaching practice and student learning. A number of factors contributed to teacher shortages. These included: a) MESC policy of funding maternity leave by requiring staff members to cover colleagues’ classes; b) MESC practice of holding inservice and other professional meetings during school time; c) suspension or termination of employment, and d) difficulties in recruiting and holding teachers. These factors contributed to high student-teacher ratios and teachers covering several classrooms. Folau School provides a good example. In 2002, a Year 1 teacher covered two classes for the first term (i.e. 87 students for 14 weeks) due to difficulty in recruiting a new teacher. Later that year, two teachers took maternity leave. This left two colleagues covering two classes with a total of 48 and 55 students respectively. Inservice attendance also had a major impact. On one occasion at Atafu School, four of eight teachers were absent. One attended an ISP inservice, two a Year 8 National Examination supervisors’ inservice, and one attended a Year 2 PEMP workshop. A similar number were absent at Folau.

I suggest that Bernstein’s (1971) theory of three interdependent message systems (i.e. teaching practices, assessment practices and curriculum) needs to be extended to include

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116 In 2003, MESC put in place a policy and accessed funding to enable all primary schools to have a phone. In 2004, some schools including Folau still did not have a phone.
117 MESC aims to have a ratio of 1:30 teachers to students. In 2002, 67% of schools met this target (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture 2003).
material factors. Material factors influence, constrain and enable certain assessment practices, the visualisation, creation and delivery of the curriculum, and teaching practice. Furthermore material objects embody messages (e.g. tell us about what and who is valued in a society) and contribute to new meanings and realities. On a simplistic level, infrastructure and resourcing in Samoa reflect the fiscal constraints of a small Pacific Island nation (Atchoarena 1993; Asian Development Bank 2000; Fairbairn-Dunlop and Associates 1998; Nabobo 2002; Coxon 2003), but they also reflect national and international priorities. As Esera notes (1996), poor resourcing and infrastructure reflect an undervaluing of primary education. On a national level over the last two decades, the government, with support from international donors, has invested monetary and human resources into the development of the National University of Samoa. This has been at the cost of primary education (Elisera 2004). At the same time, on a local level, villages invest huge effort, time, energy and ingenuity to obtain hundreds of thousands of dollars to construct large, extravagant churches, whilst local primary schools lack basic teaching/learning resources, infrastructure and furniture. Lack of resources, furniture and poor infrastructure not only reflect and embody meanings but they simultaneously create contexts where new layers of meaning are constructed and played out. Later in this section, I discuss the significance of space and bodies within defined spaces like classrooms. I also show how material constraints, like a lack of furniture in classrooms, embody messages, which in turn shape student-teacher interactions, teaching and learning.

Sociocultural context of teaching and learning

Current pedagogical practices are consistent with commonly held beliefs, values and understandings about children, what is knowledge and what is the appropriate relationship between adults and children. There is a strong relationship between what happens in classrooms and: a) informal pedagogies (i.e. how children learn in home and village contexts; b) beliefs about how children learn; c) beliefs about what is good teaching; and d) core cultural values, understandings and practices. When discussing how children learn new skills and acquire knowledge in home and village contexts, participants focused on children’s willingness to observe, listen and if appropriate, do. Responsibility for learning was primarily

118 Often this related to the use of corporal punishment. If a parent lodged a complaint with the police, the teacher was generally suspended. If charges eventuated, the teacher was then dismissed.
119 Travelling between the airport and my host’s home in Apia (approximately 26 kilometres) we counted 42 churches.
placed on the child. Participants seldom referred to explicit, sequenced verbal instruction by adults. This is consistent with Odden’s and Rochat’s (2004) and Vaipae’s (1999) observation that adults seldom gave explicit explanations to children about how to do a task. Instead, informal learning tended to occur in incidental and unstructured contexts (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Odden and Rochat 2004) with children as peripheral observers rather than active participants (Odden and Rochat 2004).

The belief that children learn through attending, listening and observing is consistent with teacher-centred pedagogies in primary classrooms in Samoa. In each instance, the teacher/adult is perceived as the expert and authority figure, who holds and defines knowledge. In the teacher-centred, transmission model (i.e. as in primary classrooms in Samoa), teachers/adults (high status) impart knowledge to students/children (low status) who acquire it by listening carefully, attending, watching and, if directed, doing. At home, “the path to knowledge is through repeated exposure, i.e. through listening and watching over and over” (Ochs 1988: 147). In the classroom, teachers model desired outcomes (e.g. give examples on the blackboard and/or lead oral responses) and students copy and imitate. Opportunities to do and develop expertise are translated into copying from the board, doing written exercises in books, revising teacher notes and chorused repetition of work. Students are encouraged to pue - catch, teu - hold/put away (in their mind) and if necessary toe fafagu - recall (literal - wake up) their knowledge. As such, the child does not participate in the idiosyncratic act of knowledge construction. Rather the child accepts and retains knowledge as defined by the teacher, intact until needed at a later date. In this context knowledge is perceived as given rather than as a human construction.

Some educators have recognised links between teacher-centred pedagogies and Samoan culture and social structure (Galo 1966; Sutter 1980; Va’a 1987a; Dawe 1989; Tanielu 1997; Tanielu 1999; Tuia 1999; Singh 2000; Singh 2001; Singh and Sinclair 2001). In the school context, children are expected to defer (i.e. display respect), listen and obey. Teachers/adults (high status) are perceived as legitimate sources of authority and knowledge, whilst children (low status) have limited rights and should not question or assume the right to express their likes and dislikes (Shore 1982; Freeman 1984; Duranti and Ochs 1986; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Mageo 1998; Singh, Dooley et al. 2001; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Shore describes relations between children and adults as ranked, complementary and unequal. In such relationships, “the lines of authority are clearly
delineated, boundaries are explicit, control is unambiguously externalised and power relations structurally stable" (Shore 1982: 214).

Samoan culture like teacher centred pedagogies is typified by strong external control. In some villages, “(v)irtually every event is planned and directed by either the leading matai or the pastor” (O’Meara 1990: 55) and in some urban areas village rules and curfews continue to be enforced. All groups of respondents believed that children needed tight control and like Samoan parents in New Zealand (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996) and Australia (Singh, Dooley et al. 2001) stated that weak parent and teacher control led to inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour. Consistent with strong external control and the belief that without directives and rules people might behave inappropriately, behaviour is often externally driven (Shore 1982; Liu 1991; Mageo 1998; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000). Village life and the nature of a small island state create contexts where people’s actions are readily observable and quickly become public knowledge (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). Awareness of audience and the potential to be shamed, encourage people to behave in socially approved ways.

As evident from the preceding paragraphs, relationships and structures within primary classrooms and the wider culture closely align with Bernstein’s visible pedagogy (1975; 1996). In both settings, relationships are explicit and hierarchical. Strong boundaries exist between the different hierarchical groups. Rules are clear-cut, and carry consequences for infringement. Adults determine time and spatial arrangements and exercise power. Whilst adults dominate, children accommodate. Children (lower status) orientate around teachers/adults (high status) and display attentive and co-operative demeanours. Strong hierarchical relationships and explicit rules in schools (and the wider society) encourage maintenance of the status quo and work against change and innovation.

Home- and school-based pedagogies do not encourage critical thinking. Adults (high status) define and control meaning whilst children and other low-ranking persons are expected to accept their authority and put aside their thoughts, likes and dislikes (Duranti and Ochs 1986). Children are socialised to listen and follow instructions and accept at face value what adults/teachers say and do and not question (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1982; Nichol 1985; Va’a 1987a; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Tanielu 1999; Tuia 1999; Vaipae 1999; Singh 2001). Consistent with this, receptive as opposed to expressive demeanours are valued within and beyond the classroom. Good students and good children attend, listen, obey, and defer.
Conversely, good teachers and good parents assert their authority, *faatoum* - direct children and do not overly praise or indulge them.

Both parents and teachers saw appropriate behaviour as the foundation to learning at home and school. Participants emphasised actions and their consequences rather than motives and intentions. In the same way that Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991: 69) found that the “need to avoid giving offence can lead to over structuring of rules for social intercourse” so too the desire to not get things wrong led to an over-emphasis on outcomes rather than processes and understanding. This meant that in the classroom, teachers and students valued the visible aspects of teaching and learning. According to respondents, good teachers turned up to school everyday, dressed tidily, stayed in their room, wrote up their boards, completed their lesson plans. *Lelei* - good and *toaga* - conscientious children went to school every day, took care to set their work out according to tightly proscribed rules, presented work tidily, and got their answers right.

The emphasis on appropriate behaviour, a constant sense of audience, and a desire to maintain relationships (i.e. not offend) create a sense of performance in both the school and wider social setting. Indeed several writers describe performance as central to day-to-day life in Samoa (Duranti 1988; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Shore 1996). Performance implies performer and the act of performing implies a disassociation between self and action. Duranti concludes that Samoans are often more concerned about “the public, displayed, performative aspect of language” rather than what people think and feel on a subjective level (Duranti 1988: 17). Likewise, Mageo (1998) and Gerber (1975; 1985) found that there is often a disparity between what people think and feel and what they say and do. The visible action becomes of overriding importance, rather than the subjective feelings and thoughts that accompany it.120

Several classroom behaviours had strong performance elements. These included; whole-class chanting, whole-class reading and rote repetition of responses. In each case, there is a strong sense of doing something so that it can be heard.121 Secondly, there is a sense of

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120 This is consistent with a society with a sociocentric orientation where the maintenance of harmonious relationships is of overriding importance.
121 Chanted chorus responses tend to be intrusively loud.
disconnection between the action and the person. Children read in disembodied, singsong voices that maintained a particular inflection and rhythm with little regard for the specific text. Thirdly, the focus is on the performance (the act of doing) and little emphasis is placed on subjective feelings and understanding. The performance in and of itself is valued. Beeby, who led several educational missions to Samoa in the mid 20th century, noted this. Lamenting the formal teaching methods he comments, “Tables and strings of words whose meanings might remain a mystery, were frequently chanted in unison and learned by heart in the hope that their meaning would some day be revealed by repetition” (Beeby 1966: 54). A fourth and alternative interpretation is that performance is a form of invocation. This interpretation is consistent with the observation that students and teachers seem to believe that in the act of doing something repeatedly (i.e. chanting, chorused responses, repetition) children learn.

Parallels also exist between school-based learning and how small children acquire language at home. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, Duranti and Ochs (1986) and Ochs (1988) describe language acquisition as a form of socialisation that encourages small children to take on sociocentric orientations. Parents and caregivers do not see small children as conversational partners (Ochs 1988; Nicol 1985) and do not assume meaning in their early language attempts and in so doing downplay the development of an individualised identity. Adults make few attempts to guess (i.e. decode) small children’s attempts at speech or expand their efforts (Ochs 1988). Rather, parents and caregivers expect small children to make their utterances clearer (i.e. responsibility is placed on the child). Ochs (ibid.) also found that caregivers used elicited sequences with small children. Adults modelled desired responses and expected small children to repeat them. The elicited sequence finds close parallels in the classroom where teachers model desired responses and children collectively repeat the response. In many instances responses are repeated several times. In both home and school contexts, children are expected to orientate around adults and take on board the models they offer.

Strong parallels exist between adult-child interactions in home and village contexts and teacher-student interactions in the classroom. In the same way that parents/caregivers display an unwillingness to cognitively attend to small children and decode/guess/interpret their early speech (Ochs 1988), teachers showed little interest in engaging with individual students and decoding, guessing or interpreting where they are at in their learning. At fieldwork schools, few teachers stopped beside children’s desks, looked at their work, and identified what the
child could/could not do. Again, paralleling Och’s findings, few teachers responded to children’s needs by offering expansions or elaborations (i.e. explaining to the child what they were doing well, where they could go to next and how to get there). Several points need emphasising. Firstly, teachers and students are unfamiliar with intense, dyadic, adult-child ‘teaching’ interactions (Ochs 1988; Odden and Rochat 2004) in their home lives. Secondly, intense dyadic teaching interactions in the classroom, require behaviours that are inconsistent with cultural beliefs and practices. Intense dyadic, one-to-one teaching interactions involve an inversion of the cultural patterns where children (low status) orientate around adults (high status). Thus, intense dyadic teaching interactions require teachers and students to take on unfamiliar and culturally inappropriate roles. 122

The hidden language of spatial relations

Hall describes spatial arrangements as a hidden language where non-verbal meanings operate as an ‘unwritten paradigm’ (Hall 1988). Spatial arrangements including people’s location within space convey important meanings in Samoa (Shore 1982; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Duranti 1992; Duranti 1994). Shore identifies centre and luma - front areas as sites of high status, readily visible, appropriate, and formal behaviour. The front part of the Samoan fale is where visitors are greeted, polite language is used and formalities observed. By contrast tua - back and periphery areas of a household are associated with low status, mundane and often grubby tasks and informality (e.g. where food is cooked, youth and children gather, animals are fed). Ochs (1998) found that interactions among younger and lower status family members more frequently occurred at back or periphery areas of a household, especially when there were visitors. The relationship between status and location remains important even for well-educated Apian families. In my host’s family the paid household help was uncomfortable eating at the front of the house with older family members. Instead she waited to eat later in the kitchen area (i.e. back area). Visitors remained in front areas entertained by older adults, whilst children and young adults hung back or scurried about meeting their needs.

Spatial arrangements are clearly visible in village layout and social organisation. The village malae - grassed area at the centre is generally surrounded by households of politically 122 These ideas are explored in depth in Chapter Four.
significant *matai* - chiefs. In the village centre and fronting the main road stand large and often grand churches. Houses and gardens in these areas tend to be well maintained. O'Meara (1990) contrasts this with back areas (i.e. inland areas behind villages) where homes are generally more humble and in some instances there is abject poverty. For Duranti, people’s location in space not only made statements about who they might be and what rights they may or may not have, but it also signalled certain sets of behaviours. “I also began seeing the spatial organization within social events as a way of defining their boundaries, as a collectively orchestrated resource to which participants would key their own performance and gain insights into others ‘potential and actual contributions’” (Duranti 1994: 55).

Morgan (2000) explores the significance of space in the classroom. Specifically he challenges the assumption that space is neutral. Instead he posits space as a social construction that “is involved in both the production and reproduction of social relationships, and is linked to political struggles of inclusion and exclusion” (ibid.: 273). Space conveys important messages about who we are, where we are entitled to be, when and who with. The organisation of space literally and metaphorically serves to keep some people in their place and simultaneously provides a context in which people may contest their physical and social location. Morgan focuses on the idea of contestation between groups. In Samoa contestation more frequently occurs within groups and within socially approved structures (Shore 1982; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). In the *fono* - meeting of village chiefs, *matai* - chiefs orally vie for the right to speak. In the classroom students vie in exams/tests and in so doing physically and socially relocate themselves within parameters set by higher status adults (i.e. teachers). In contrast, boundaries between hierarchically distinct groups (e.g. children and adults, students and teachers) remain relatively fixed (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991).

Spatial arrangements in primary schools in Samoa closely align with Bernstein’s visible (i.e. teacher-centred) pedagogy (1975; 1996). Boundaries are for the most part explicit and not challenged. In Samoa, ‘good’ teachers maintain strong classroom control and ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained. This contrasts strongly with Manke’s (1997) observation that Western teachers in their efforts to manage children disguise their manipulation of space and time. In Samoa, students were careful to not intrude on adult spaces. Children seldom approached teachers at their desk. If they entered teacher-defined spaces, they hovered discreetly at the doorway waiting for permission to enter. When given permission, they approached slowly, with head bowed and crouched beside the person they
wished to speak to, taking care to keep their voice low. One teacher strongly criticised a new female principal for failing to assert her pule - power and thus damaging the mamalu - respected status of her teaching staff by allowing parents to enter the staffroom area. Only one interviewed parent took the liberty to join teachers in a staff area. This parent had taught for many years and was well known by senior staff. In each instance, children and adults were careful to iloa lou tulaga - know your (their) place and teu le va - tidy the space (i.e. behave appropriate to the relationship).

In different contexts spatial arrangements and people’s locations within these crosscut, reinforce and/or contradict each other. In the classroom, students’ seating arrangements often reflected spatial and social relations within the wider community. Teachers and parents linked high achievement with social advantage, and social advantage with having a good income, a well built house, expensive household items (e.g. a fridge, electric oven, stereo etc.), a vehicle, being educated, and holding a significant matai title or socially esteemed position (e.g. a church minister). Residences of high ranking matai - titled individuals, faifeau - church ministers, and big storeowners usually fronted on to the malae - village centre or main road. Sometimes when social locations in the community were challenged in the classroom parents took drastic steps. Several teachers described situations where high-ranking families took a child out of the local school because a child from a ‘lesser family’ performed better. In the classroom students’ physical location made statements about who they were (high versus low achievers) and largely determined the nature, quality and frequency of student-teacher interactions.

Relative positioning of bodies within space also embodied important messages and impacted on teaching and learning. As noted earlier, when teachers directed students to bring their books up for marking, students formed a line. Waiting students knelt, crouched or sat on the floor to ensure that they were positioned below the height of the seated teacher, thus acknowledging the teacher’s higher status. When the teacher looked at their work, students retained their lowered and often frontal position unless directly told to look at their book. The distance, posture and location of the student symbolised the relative status of the teacher and student and ensured that there was little or no visual or verbal engagement with the student about their work.
In interviews, a number of parents and teachers alluded to spatial relations impacting on wider educational issues. Rural teachers believed that town schools had better access to quality resources and some believed that town teachers were more valued. As stated by one teacher, "E manatu faatauvaa i faiaoga i tua" ([They] regard teachers at the back [i.e. in villages] as not important). Secondly, some parents believed that town teachers worked harder and attributed this to their proximity to MESC offices and increased visibility. Thirdly, a school’s location within a village impacted on how the school was valued. Folau School stood off the main road and several hundred metres up an auala galue - work road (i.e. road to plantation areas). The principal explained with some bitterness her struggle to get village support to upgrade the toilet block and build a strong fence around the school. By contrast, the Roman Catholic primary school stood on the main road, and beside the Catholic church and homes of senior matai - titleholders. The school’s paintwork was fresh, gardens maintained and the school enclosed by a solid fence. Fourthly, suggestive of Shore’s (1982) association of uta - bush with the dark side of human nature, a tertiary educator drew links between the isolated location of some schools (i.e. away from central/front village areas) and unprofessional teacher conduct (Edex2). Cumulatively, the examples reveal that centre/front is associated with feeling valued, visibility, and appropriate behaviour. By contrast, periphery and back areas are associated with not being noticed and valued. Finally periphery and back areas are perceived as spaces where the dark and undesirable aspects of human nature lurk.

Shore draws an analogy between the siva - a traditional Samoan dance and the spatial arrangements of the village. The dance of the village taupou - maiden represents the “centre, focus, grace, inhibitions and control”. By contrast the a'iuli - male dancer, who is intentionally clumsy, comical, and flamboyant, represents the “periphery, aggression, power, expansiveness and disorder” (Shore 1982: 260). There are interesting and subtle analogies between the classroom and Shore’s analysis. Children who are high performers sit near the front and as high performers are seen to embody inhibition and control (i.e. are filemu - quiet, faalogo - attentive/listen, faaaloalo - display respectful demeanours, and loto maualalo - humble). By contrast, poor achieving students are located at the back and periphery areas of the classroom and described as malosi le ula - really naughty/mischievous, faatamala -

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123 In this case, the unprofessional conduct involved a district secondary school teacher getting a senior student pregnant.
irresponsible, *tafao vale* – ‘roam abouts’, *le pulea* - lacking self discipline and control, *le usitai* - disobedient, and *le faalogo* - not listening or attending (to those of higher status).

Much of the formal teaching and learning centres around the front area of the classroom. Va’a (1987b) refers to the teacher being like a conductor of a traditional singing group. From the centre front, the teacher leads and guides the class. Children, seated on the mat, follow. As noted by Va’a, teachers are more likely to engage with students seated near the centre-front. A teacher’s location suggests an ‘on’ versus ‘off’ stage persona. At the front the teacher is ‘on-stage’ or ‘in-role’ (i.e. actively teaching). At the back or periphery (e.g. at their desk, verandah etc.) they are no longer ‘in role’ and accessible to students. On- and off-stage behaviours are reflected in language usage. At the front, teachers almost always use the polite *t* and *n* in their speech. At the rear of the classroom, teachers are more likely to slip into the informal *k* and *ng*.

Lack of furniture and the arrangement of furniture within classrooms also impacted on student-teacher interactions and the nature and quality of teaching and learning. When there was a shortage of tables and chairs the weakest groups were invariably placed on the floor at the back of the mat area. Children did their work lying or sitting on the mat. At no time did teachers physically position themselves on the mat, at student level, to assist them with their work. Indeed, such an action would have been perceived by students and teachers, as inappropriate for the higher status teacher.

In summary, spatial relations and people’s postures and positions within these spaces impact on teaching and learning. This ‘silent’ (Hall 1976) but powerful language impacts in a number of ways. In this section, I have shown how people’s use and organisation of space in the classroom convey certain meanings. Secondly, I have suggested that people’s positions in space ‘locks’ them into certain ways of behaving and being. Thirdly, location and people’s posture and position within spaces influence the outcomes of interactions. For instance, when neighbours came to our house to borrow money they usually entered through the back door. Their body posture and manner quickly indicated the purpose of the visit. With body lowered they approached and sat/or crouched and steadfastly refused our invitation to sit on an empty chair. In most instances, they would address us in polite language (*t* and *n* form) and use appropriate respect words. The combination of deferential posture and polite language bound us into a polite and formal exchange and willingness to meet the request.
Conclusion

This chapter has explored beliefs and understandings about how children learn and what makes a person a good or poor teacher. I have suggested that there are strong correlations between beliefs about how children learn, between informal pedagogies and what happens in primary classrooms. Participants strongly believed that education has a social and moral function and should support the *faaSamoa*. Consistent with this, participants emphasised personal and moral qualities that enabled children to be good students and adults to be good teachers.

A large section of this chapter is a descriptive synopsis of classroom observations. Classroom pedagogies closely aligned with Bernstein’s visible pedagogy (Bernstein 1975; Bernstein 1996). Key observations were that:

- teacher-centred practices continue. (Teachers largely control what happens within classrooms, when, where and how.);
- teaching is directed to the whole class and there is little acknowledgment of individual differences;
- most formal teaching is conducted from the blackboard;
- throughout the school day there are a series of sequenced movements. The dominant teacher movement is blackboard-teacher’s desk, blackboard-teacher’s desk, etc., whilst the dominant student movement is mat-student desk, mat-student desk, etc. Sometimes these movements are interrupted by pair and/or group work;
- on the mat or at desks there are patterns of behaviour that stand out and take on a ritualistic quality. These include whole-class chanting (e.g. of tables and/or spelling words), singsong whole class reading and rereading of shared texts, and question-answer sequences with whole-class repetition of responses;
- there is a strong emphasis on form, careful presentation, adhering to an established set of steps, and getting things right over and above understanding. Outcomes are valued over and above processes;
- there is a limited focus on the development of critical thinking and inquiry;
- there is often poor use of student and teacher time;
- teaching and learning is largely constrained to a tightly prescribed, dated, and poorly resourced curriculum;
- spatial relationships impact on teaching and learning.
The final section of this chapter attempted to empathically understand teaching practice. Picking up on Bernstein’s (1971) idea that teaching practice is part of an integrated message system or code, I looked at the interplay between the emphasis on testing at all levels, the narrow and prescriptive curriculum and how teachers go about their work. Like Bernstein, I conclude that it is not possible to change teaching practice in isolation. Change needs to address all three areas simultaneously. I then suggested that teaching and learning are also constrained (or enabled) by resourcing and infrastructure. Indeed material factors need to be considered as an additional message system or code, in that materials (or the lack of) embody messages, enable, shape and influence what happens in classrooms and, in so doing, contribute to the construction of new meanings.

Any analysis of teaching practice and student learning needs to take into account the wider sociocultural context within which schools are set. Teaching and learning in Samoa are profoundly influenced by:

- people’s beliefs about how children learn;
- informal pedagogies in the wider community;
- people’s beliefs about what constitutes good teaching and appropriate adult-child relationships;
- a strong cultural focus on appropriate behaviour;
- an emphasis on well defined, hierarchical relationships between different groups (e.g. student-teachers, children-adults, and untitled-titled adults);
- a strong endorsement of external controls;
- the visibility of everyday life and a constant sense of audience, performance, and potential for shame;
- socialisation patterns in the wider community;
- language acquisition patterns in the home;
- interaction patterns in the wider community (especially child-adult relationships);
- the significance of space and people’s relative location within given spaces.

When considering the sociocultural context of education in Samoa it is no longer adequate to confine the discussion to the physical boundaries of the small island state. Samoa is part of an increasingly globalised world. Samoan residents travel to Pacific Rim countries and increasingly, Samoans who have lived abroad return home. This combined with modern media, opportunities for study overseas, the increasing presence of foreigners, international aid projects and the increasing flow of ideas across borders, means that teaching practice is
increasingly contested. A central proposition in this thesis is that pedagogies promoted by aid projects and Western educated locals (e.g. teacher educators and senior MESC staff) are often incongruent with the values, beliefs and understandings of the wider population. In this chapter, I have attempted to reveal these values, beliefs and understandings in the hope of creating better understanding about teaching and learning in primary classrooms.
Chapter Four: Exploring Student-Teacher Interactions

Introduction

Education policies in Samoa call for a move away from teacher-centred pedagogies to more “active and interactive teaching methods which develop individualised and small group teaching techniques” (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a: 18). They also call for teaching methods that will “encourage student initiative, imagination and ability to think critically” (ibid.: 18). Recent teacher inservice objectives reiterate these ideas and call for pedagogies that will develop students’ “ability to analyse knowledge critically in a learning environment that encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought” (Redden 2002: 4). MESC sees the role of teachers as critical in achieving these objectives and lifting student achievement (ibid.).

International research confirms that indeed teachers are critical in lifting student achievement (Hopkins and Stren 1996; School of Education University of Queensland 2001; Hattie 2002). Research also shows that the quality and nature of the relationship between students and teachers are of enormous importance (Hopkins 1996; School of Education 2001; Lingard 2002). This chapter focuses on student-teacher interactions in primary schools in Samoa. Given the desperate shortage of educational resources in Samoa (Esera 1996; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a) the teacher is a critical source of information and facilitator of learning. In this context the quality of teaching and learning becomes intensely dependent on the quality of the student-teacher relationship.

Bernstein (1996) distinguishes between the discursive and regulative aspects of pedagogy. Discursive pedagogy is focused on the transmission of content, whilst regulative pedagogy is concerned with the control of student behaviour. The distinction is one of emphasis and intent rather than exclusivity. Teaching and learning occur in the context of teacher-student relationships. Student-teacher interactions are socially and culturally shaped. Students and teachers bring to their relationships expectations as to what is appropriate behaviour. The ways teachers and students interact is a reflection of their values, attitudes, and beliefs as to who they are, who the other is and how each should behave towards the other. Teachers shape
how students go about their learning and students shape how teachers go about their teaching. Both the teacher and student regulate how knowledge is transmitted and acquired. Both create and maintain the regulative pedagogy that mediates the discursive pedagogy within the classroom.

In Samoa, teacher preservice training and inservice programmes actively promote a range of ‘good’ teaching practices. For the most part, teachers readily shared ideas as to what constituted ‘good’ practice. However, there was frequently a disparity between teacher statements and what teachers actually did (Esera 1996). I suggest that the disjunction between professed and actual practice occurs because MESC and teacher inservice messages about ‘good’ practice often ask teachers to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their personal beliefs and understandings about children and about what constitutes an appropriate relationship with children. Implied in this position, is the idea that you cannot readily separate the teacher as professional from the teacher as a person.

This chapter explores student-teacher relationships in primary classrooms in Samoa. In section a) Teachers and students do not form two ‘tidy’ groups, I acknowledge the increasing diversity within the Samoan population. Section b) Contending perspectives, touches on the work of several earlier researchers. In section c) Case study, I share an example of an interaction between a teacher and her class. This is summarised into key observations. I then use interview material and further field observations to explore in more depth identified classroom interaction patterns. This forms section d) Elaboration of key observations. In section e) I look at Socialisation patterns with the family, and finally, in f) I explore the links between home socialisation and student-teacher interaction patterns.

Teachrs and students do not form two ‘tidy’ groups

In Samoa there is considerable variation in teachers’ philosophies and practice. For example, in interviews some teachers stated that praise led to children feeling good about themselves, believing in themselves and working harder. Other teachers expressed the view that praise made children mimita - proud, think they already ‘knew it all’ and not work as hard. Teachers also varied in their practice. For example, whilst the majority of observed teachers placed the best students at the front of the classroom, a few chose to differ. In a minority of classrooms,
children were placed in mixed ability groups or weak students were grouped at the front. Despite differences in teaching philosophies and practice, the interaction patterns evident in the case study were present to varying degrees in almost all classrooms.

Significant differences also exist in students' backgrounds. Location (rural Savaii, rural Upolu, proximity to the capital, semi-urban, urban residence), household size and structure, church affiliation, family income, rank, status and level of education all impact on a child's socialisation and on the emerging person. Sutter (1980) proposed that urban parents were more likely to offer children alternatives, use indirect orders, praise, reward and nurture the development of the child as an individual. By contrast Brown (1986) was surprised by the consistency of attitudes and practices of Samoan parents towards their children in Savaii, Apia and New Zealand. In the school context Va’a (1987a) and Tanielu (1997) noted significant differences between urban and rural students. Urban students were more open in their interactions with peers, more likely to express an opinion and showed more inquiry-type behaviour. By contrast rural students were more furtive in their interactions, conforming in their behaviour, and were more likely to show unquestioning acceptance of teacher statements and actions.

The urban-rural distinction is full of ambiguities. Many urban families are recent migrants from outer villages. In interviews, urban parents’ values, beliefs, aspirations and world-views often showed close alignment with those of rural parents. There is also considerable variation in family size, make-up, parental life experience, income, educational levels, status, and mobility in both village- and town-based families. The physical boundaries between rural and urban are complex. Traditional villages exist within the boundaries of the capital and significant areas of freehold land lie within and alongside urban village areas. Furthermore, there are differences between government primary schools. Specifically, village school cultures (including those in urban areas) differed in significant ways from that of the former Malifa Compound schools. Rural students are also hidden in urban school numbers. One urban teacher estimated that over half her A stream class were rural students who travelled daily by bus or lived with town-based relatives.
Contending perspectives

In this chapter I suggest that there is a high level of continuity between home and school cultures. This position differs from that of several earlier researchers. Sutter (1980) argued that when children enter school in Samoa they experience a discontinuity between home and school values. Sutter saw the discontinuity as greater for rural children whose socialisation was more communal in orientation. He contrasted this with urban socialisation, which he argued fostered a child’s “sense of individualism and prepares him for the adult/child relationship he finds at school” (ibid.: 68). Sutter described the rural child’s relationship with adult caregivers as one of near avoidance and diffused in that children grow up interacting with a range of adult family members. In this context older siblings play a central role in the socialisation and care of younger siblings. By contrast, the urban child-adult interactions were described as more intense and consistent with the supposedly intense teacher-child relationship that the child experiences at school. My observations of teacher-student interactions differ. I suggest that teacher-student relationships in both rural and urban contexts are typified by distance and formality.

Sutter describes the pre-school child’s relationships as mostly centred around his or her peer group. He argues that on arrival at school the teacher replaces the primacy of peer relationships. Again, I disagree. Peer relationships remained of great importance to the primary school child. Students sought out peers to obtain goods (pencils, rulers, rubbers, and food), when needing help, to share, and for company. Sutter also claims that in the school context teachers worked with children as individuals, taking time to explain, answer, and help. By contrast, I found that teachers’ communication in the classroom was almost always directed at the whole class and that there was almost no one-to-one interaction with students about their work. Teacher patterns of relating fostered group relations rather than the development of individual identity.

Sutter (1980) correctly noted that teachers constantly regulate, direct and monitor students’ behaviour. He then claims that teachers’ directives differ from home socialisation in intensity. By contrast, I found that teacher directives were usually diffused (directed at the group), and removed (issued at a distance and relatively impersonal in tone and content). Sutter also suggested that school encouraged the development of the child as an individual, through praise and reward systems and by teachers justifying their orders and therefore affirming the
child's individual ego. According to Sutter, the "near avoidance between adults and children" at home shifted to an "intense interaction" at school (ibid.: 47). During class observations, I seldom observed teachers justifying or rationalising directives. Praise, when used, tended to be group-orientated, general and infrequent, and relationships were typified by distance.

Like Sutter, sociolinguists Duranti and Ochs (1986) focused on the discontinuity between home and school. Based on their work in Falefa, they concluded that in their primary socialisation, Samoan children work co-operatively to accomplish tasks, whereas schools value individual task accomplishment and competition. Duranti and Ochs describe school as a form of secondary socialisation where "children learn to expect recognition and positive assessments, given successful completion of a task" (ibid.: 229). My research indicates high levels of discrete and open cooperation in primary classrooms amongst students and that few teachers seek out opportunities to acknowledge, praise or reward individual work. Furthermore, competition and individual achievement are central to the Samoan way of life (Shore 1982; O'Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1998; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000).

Pacific educator Helu Thaman describes teacher-centred pedagogy and the "condescending and authoritarian style of teaching" (Helu Thaman 1996: 13) common to many Pacific schools as remnants of colonial education. Indeed, mission and colonial powers introduced formal education into Samoa. However, like Kolig (2002), I question the tendency to place responsibility for those aspects that we do not like about ourselves and our culture on a colonial past. Rather we need to explore why these aspects of colonial education became so rapidly incorporated and entrenched and why they were and are so resistant to change. I suggest that teacher-centred (i.e. adult-centred) and authoritarian patterns of interaction are embedded in the faaSamoan - Samoan culture. Like Tuia, I suggest that schools are "dominated by the use of the Samoan culture" (Tuia 1999: 39). Taleni (1998) also notes continuities between home and school in that both emphasise appropriate behaviour, respect and obedience. Similarly, Tagoilelagi (1995) and Tanielu (1997; 2002b) found continuities in

124 Beeby and other New Zealand education officials lamented the authoritarian and teacher-centred practices in Samoa but found strong resistance to their efforts to bring about change (Barrington 1968). Over the last two decades there has been a range of aid programmes and in-services promoting more child-centred approaches to teaching. Despite these programmes there has been relatively little change in teacher practice (Esera 1996; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a).
values and adult-child interaction patterns between home, Aoga Aso Sa - Sunday School, Aoga Faifeau - Pastor School and aoga tulaga lua - primary school.

Case Study

During my research I became increasingly fascinated by the interpersonal dynamics of the classroom. In order to understand better what was happening, I recorded what students and teachers did in the classroom, who initiated relationships and with whom, how long these interactions lasted, the content, nature and tone of the interaction and where the different kinds of interactions took place (i.e. front or back of the classroom, mat area, teacher or student desk, etc.). Despite differences in teacher philosophy and practice, student-teacher interactions proved remarkably consistent. The following case study outlines a two-hour period in an urban school.

7.55 am: Students are seated cross-legged on the floor in front of the blackboard. They are quiet and attentive. The teacher stands at the blackboard and reviews the previous day’s work. The students have their books open on their laps. They have recorded the date and instructions, copied questions from the board and written in their answers (changing direct speech to indirect speech). The exercise has been copied, word for word, from the English scheme.

The teacher selects individual students to read each direct speech sentence and then give the indirect form. Occasionally she affirms their response with lelei good. If the response is incorrect, the teacher corrects it. The class repeats the correct answer two or three times, shouting in unison. This pattern continues for about 15 minutes.

The students then practise the structure in groups. The teacher listens to several groups. At 8.35 each group goes to the front to share its sentences. The others sit on the mat in group lines. The teacher occasionally affirms a response with lelei - good. One group makes several errors. She scolds this group saying, “Vaai la i lo outou mimita. O outou le kolupu lua, ae valelea. Manaia le kolupu fa. Toitiiti tuli outou i fafo” (See, you’re too proud/full of yourselves. You’re the second (to top) group - but stupid. Group Four did it really well. Soon you’ll get chased outside). Soon after, she responds to another group in a mixture of English
and Samoan, “Open your mouths! What! ... What kind of a sentence is that! O le a le aoga o le mimita ae pipilo outou gutu. O le mea na e tupu pe a mimita.” (Open you mouths! What! ... What use is it to be proud when your mouths’ stink. That’s what happens when you’re too proud).

At 8.45 the teacher tells the students to do an activity on the board. Students return to their desks. Some have no books or pencils. The teacher sits on an empty chair, reading the English scheme. She does not interact with the students. The students are relatively quiet. There is discreet whispering between adjacent students. Most interactions involve students borrowing pencils or rulers. Some students whisper to peers for help with their work. After 10 minutes the teacher sets new work on the board. The students are directed to complete the activity in their Word Study books. No explanation is given for the new work. The activity involves matching English words with their meaning (also in English).

From 9.05 till 9.50 the teacher is seated at her desk. Except for a brief rove around the room she shows little interest in what the children are doing. She occasionally calls out a general instruction to settle down and get on task. A significant number of students struggle with the activity. At no time do students approach the teacher for resources (pencils or books) or assistance with their work. Students are seated in six groups. The top students form Group One and the weakest Group Six. Groups One and Two sit closest to the board and the teacher when positioned at the front of the class (i.e. when actively teaching). Groups Three, Four and Five are seated across the back of the room. Group Six do not have desks and sit near the back of the mat area. The books of Groups One and Two are up-to-date, marked and for the most part corrected. There are gaps in the bookword of Groups Five and Six, marking is irregular and work is seldom corrected.¹²⁵

The case study is not atypical. Key observations include:

- students display an unwillingness to approach the teacher for assistance;
- students display an unwillingness to ask the teacher questions;

¹²⁵I have endeavoured to present the case study without descriptive words that might imply judgement. However, in this form it fails to convey the tone of much of the classroom interaction. Fieldwork notes describe the teacher as distant in her manner and interactions with students. Her voice was often loud and abrupt.
• there is limited one-to-one interaction between the teacher and students about students’ work and learning;
• there is little informal interaction between the teacher and students;
• there is a strong focus on appropriate behaviour (regulative pedagogy);
• the teacher shows greater interest in some students and less interest in others;
• the teacher’s interaction with some students includes shaming, verbal put downs and threats;
• there is limited use of praise;
• there is a high level of discrete and open peer interaction and cooperation.

Elaboration of Key Observations

Students display an unwillingness to approach teachers for assistance or ask questions

Often at the end of a formal teaching session teachers asked the class if they understood. Almost always students responded in chorus, “Malamalama faafetai” ([We] understand thank you). When the students set off to do follow-up work in their books, it became apparent that many did not understand. Students proceeded to write up the activity minus the answers or furtively asked a neighbour for assistance. The Malamalama faafetai response took on an almost a ritualistic quality. It was rare for students to take advantage of the ‘invitation’ to ask a question. On the few instances where this occurred the students invariably were high achievers and in two cases children of the teacher concerned. The malamalama faafetai response was generally chanted in unison, was the expected response and signalled closure of formal teaching and access to the teacher. As one urban parent (UP2) stated, having said malamalama faafetai the students knew “Ua uma” (It [the opportunity to ask] had finished). Sometimes teachers confirmed this, stating that no one was to ask any further questions.

In interviews, students, parents and teachers gave a variety of explanations as to why students do not approach teachers. Several high performing students asserted that they would approach the teacher. Simultaneously, they recognised that most students, especially those that were vaivai - weak would not. Several stated that the child who was naunau - determined about their schoolwork (UP3) and the student who was fia maua le poto - desired to be clever (Rst6) would approach the teacher rather than remain pogisa - in the dark. Several students believed that others did not ask questions because they were lazy and uninterested in learning.
However most students, parents, and teachers believed students were fefe/palaai – afraid to ask. In response to the question, “Why do students not ask questions?” there were 25 references to being fefe - fearful/scared or palaai - being cowardly/afraid, 13 references to being ma - ashamed, 3 references to pate - lazy and 12 references to fear of being sasa/fue/fasi - physically punished.¹²⁶

Pei e fefe le tamaititi e toe fai atu i le faiaoga e le o malamalama. ... Faapea le faiaoga, ua alu le taimi e famalamalama mai ma fai metotia ia malamalama ai tamaiti. Ae e le o malamalama. (It's like the student is afraid to again say to the teacher that she doesn’t understand. ... The teacher thinks that they have already spent time and used different methods to help the student understand. But they still don’t understand - Ust4.)

The student elaborates that the child is afraid in case the teacher hits them so instead asks a peer. He then adds that teachers are different. Some you can approach and some you can’t.

E fefe. Aua a fai atu le faiaoga pe e i ai se mea e le o malamalama ai, ae fai atu le leai (reference to ritualised malamalama faafetai - [we] understand thankyou response). (Ae) E i ai le mea e fia malamalama i ai ae musu e fai atu i le faiaoga aua e fefe i le faiaoga. (They are scared. Because when the teacher asks if there is something that they don’t understand they respond no. [But] there is something that they want to know but they are unwilling to tell the teacher because they are afraid of the teacher - Rst1.)

O le isi mea ua musu (The other thing is that they are unwilling [to ask]) - thank you for the question. Ua uma ona faamalamalama e le faiaoga (The teacher has already explained) so the person who can’t understand (pause). When the teachers says, ‘Do you understand?’ She says, ‘Yes, thank you (i.e. ‘Malamalama faafetai.’ sequence)’. She don’t raise her hand (sic) because she is scared. Because when she raised her hand (sic) the teachers says, ‘Where did you put your ears? Where did you put your mind?’ ... O le mea ua oo i lona mind (In her mind she thinks), once when I raise my hand the teacher will pick on me. Once when I raise my hand the teacher will scold me (sic) - Rst5.

Students and parents frequently linked fear with the possibility of physical punishment. According to one rural student (Rst3), students do not ask questions because “E fefe. E fefe nei sasa ia e le faiaoga. Sasaina ia. Pe tuli ia i fafo” (Scared. They are scared in case the teacher hits them. Hit by him/her. Or chased outside). Unwillingness to ask was also linked to fear of being aamul/faama - shamed by the teacher and/or peers.

¹²⁶ Physical punishment is discussed in Chapter Six. Whilst students referred to fear of being hit, teachers in
E i ai le mea e ta’u o le matamuli. E matamuli ona ua le maua le mea ua fesili atu. A iloa e isi tamaiti, faapea, ‘Ua ai! Vaai ia lale e le iloa tali. E le iloa fai se mea.’ (There is the thing called matamuli - shyness, being easily embarrassed/ashamed. They are matamuli because they have not understood the thing they are asking about. If other children know they will say, ‘Oh! Look at her. She doesn’t know how to answer. She doesn’t know how to do anything’ - Ust1.)

E fefe. Pe e fefe pe ma. Ne’i (pause) faapea ua fesili soo. Poo ua valea. (He’s afraid. Afraid or ashamed/embarrassed. In case [pause] [people] think he asks all the time. Or he’s stupid - RP6.)

Several teachers and parents felt that children’s early experiences at school determined their willingness to ask and/or approach the teacher. When a teacher used a harsh tone, shamed a student, or discouraged questions, some students assumed other teachers to be similar. In this instance two cultural traits appeared to work in contradictory ways. On the one hand, teachers and students tended to see and relate to each other as members of a group rather than as individuals. On the other hand, a cultural emphasis on adapting one’s behaviour according to social actors and context implies recognition of human idiosyncrasies, an ability to read those idiosyncrasies and accordingly take on new persona. Interestingly, some students and teachers noted that certain groups of students (urban children, children from an aiga lelei - ‘good’ family, and academically able students) were more willing to break established social practices and assert their right to teacher time.

A cluster of rural students stated in reference to their teacher, “I le matou vasega e sa le le fesili” (In our class we are forbidden to not ask). Significantly one student (Rst4) added:

E sa le fefe, E leai se mea e fefe fia. Ia, aua, e le faapea e sasa atu ona o le ita. O le sasa ia iloa se faipu. (It’s forbidden to be afraid. There is no reason to be afraid. Yes because it’s not like you are being hit because [the teacher] is angry. [He] hits in order [for the student] to know a sentence - Rst4.)

Whilst the teacher had explicitly attempted to change the ‘rules’, the student remained entrenched in old ways of thinking, fearing that he might still be punished. Interestingly, the student rationalises the punishment, stating that it would not be an act of anger (i.e. uncontrolled/irrational) on the teacher’s part. Rather, it would be a moral act and for the student’s good.

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fieldwork schools seldom did not often use physical punishment.

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Several parents and teachers recognised a continuity between patterns of relationships at home and at school.

_E tai tutusa i totonu o le aoga ma le aiga. I le aiga ia, a fesili soo le tamaititi i le tamā poo le tina e ita. Aua le fesili soo. Tasi le talu, lava! La, a lea (pause), pet ua tutusa. Ua tupu i le aoga le mea na. Tasi, ha fesili lava! Fesili faatolu, faata loa le fataoga. E leaga. Leaga le ita._ (The school and home are almost the same. In the family if a child asks their father or mother questions all the time they get cross. [They say] don’t ask all the time. One time is enough! Yes it’s [pause] it’s just the same. The same thing happens at school. One, two questions - enough! When they ask three times the teacher gets mad. It’s bad. Getting angry is bad - RT2.)

Another rural parent (RP6) commented that parents often respond to children’s questions with short retorts like: “‘Tae.’ ‘Tailo.’ ‘Fesili soo!’ _O le ita ma le augata e tali le tamaititi._” (“Yes.” ‘Don’t know.’ ‘Ask all the time!’ [expression of exasperation that an older person uses when tired of children asking questions]. [The adult] is angry and lazy/tired to answer the child.) The parent then adds that eventually the child will learn not to ask. Other adults recognised that parents differed. “_O isi matua e tali le fesili soo a tamaiti._ Ae o isi matua, e le lavā tautala soo. E le ita, ae le lavā tautala. So they say ‘Soia le fesili soo.’” (Some parents answer the many questions their children ask. But other parents can’t be bothered to talk all the time. They’re not cross but they can’t be bothered talking. So they say, ‘Don’t ask all the time’ - RT2.)

Va’a (1987a; 1987b) in her observation of science lessons in an urban and rural primary classroom noted significant differences in student and teacher interaction patterns.127 Va’a found that the urban students and teacher were more likely to engage in inquiry-type behaviour. Furthermore she found that the nature of the teacher statement (encouraging inquiry-type behaviour versus encouraging conforming-type behaviour) largely determined student responses. Va’a then placed the urban teacher in the rural classroom and vice versa and was surprised at the degree to which the students determined the teachers’ behaviour. Va’a concluded that “the differences in the two teachers did not influence whether the classroom interaction was inquiry type or conforming type” (Va’a 1987b: 137). Instead she surmised that a subtle interplay between the student and teacher shaped the interaction.

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127Va’a (1987a; 1987b) carried out the urban part of her study at a Malifa Compound school. In the early 1980s, a number of Malifa staff had trained as teachers in New Zealand (under a scholarship scheme). Their presence significantly influenced the teaching practice within the school.
Va’a also noticed that when students conversed in English they exhibited more questioning type behaviour. Conversely, students using Samoan were more likely to conform to appropriate Samoan ways of relating. Clearly language carries important social messages and appears to signal which set of sociocultural rules apply. However, I suggest that multiple and crosscutting social indicators impact on teacher-student interactions. These may include; place of residency, socioeconomic status of family, educational level of family or caregivers, mobility, and exposure to oral and written English. As stated earlier these social indicators influence the kind of socialisation children experience and their subsequent interaction patterns at school. Those with high levels of English competency are more likely to come from socially advantaged, well-educated, bilingual families (Lameta 1998; Pereira 2002b) and be exposed to alternative child-adult interaction patterns.

Research in New Zealand indicates that Pacific students often show an unwillingness to ask questions and seek help (Jones 1991; Dickie 2000; Petelo 2003; Silipa 2004). Tertiary students commented that the difficulty was intensified when the lecturer was Samoan. Students cited fear of being shamed or perceived as fiapoto - too big for your boots/wanting to be smart (Dickie 2000). Again, rather like language in the preceding paragraph, ethnicity appears to signal to social actors which set of interaction ‘rules’ apply. This has interesting implications in New Zealand where there is a belief that Pacific teachers better meet the needs of Pacific students. It is possible that some Pacific students might feel more constrained in their interactions when teachers are of the same ethnicity and that this might work against sustained one-to-one interactions and the development of critical and inquiry-based thinking skills.

There is limited one-to-one interaction between teachers and students about students’ work and learning and little informal interaction

In the same way that students displayed an unwillingness to approach teachers for assistance, few teachers sought out opportunities to engage with students on a one-to-one basis about their learning. The example given in the case study is not atypical. For example: 128
**Year 8 class.** Students are working through old Year 8 exam papers. The teacher is working at her desk. Students converse quietly. Most of the conversation relates to their work. During a 55-minute period the teacher speaks to three students from her desk. No student approaches the teacher at her desk during this time.

**Year 5 class.** The teacher goes through a Word Study activity at the blackboard. Students are seated on the floor. The teacher directs students to return to their desks and do the activity in their Word Study books. Students work relatively quietly. They share several dictionaries and assist each other. The teacher is seated at her desk for almost an hour. A final-year Faculty of Education student sits at a student desk. There is no interaction between the teacher, the student teacher and the students during this period. When students complete the activity they do not approach the teacher.

**Year 4 class.** Throughout the day the teacher asks students at the end of a teaching sequence if they have understood or have a question. The students respond in unison, "Malamalama faafetai" ([I/We] understand thankyou). The teacher divides her time between the blackboard (active teaching), her desk, sitting at a student table or circulating. No student approaches her at her desk or at a student table unless instructed to do so. Verbal interactions are teacher-initiated, gentle in tone, and for the most part relate to getting on task. During Oral Language she moves around students as they work in groups and corrects their sentence structures. During Maths she shows a weak group how to use bottle tops to multiply. During writing time there are several interactions that I cannot hear that appear to relate to students’ work.

The teacher in the Year 4 class was atypical in the degree that to which she engaged with students on a one-to-one basis about their work. In over 30 classrooms visited, only four teachers engaged with individual students about their work on a relatively frequent basis. During the fieldwork period I became increasingly fascinated by the lack of one-to-one engagement between teachers and students and by students’ unwillingness to initiate interaction. In order to understand better what was happening in classrooms I recorded on

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128 To ensure the anonymity of the teachers I do not indicate whether these schools are urban or rural.
tracking sheets\textsuperscript{129} where teachers and students were located, what they were doing in those locations and who they engaged with. Results were consistent with key points identified in the case study.

As stated in the previous chapter, teachers usually conducted formal teaching at the blackboard.\textsuperscript{130} Teaching content, instructions and directives were almost always directed at the class as a whole. Occasionally a teacher directed a weak student/group of students to an alternative activity. The tendency to relate to students as a collective whole was particularly interesting given that results from weekly and monthly tests, report cards, term and/or mid year exam results and time spent with students indicated huge variability in their knowledge and skills. Collective instructions served to downplay individual differences and individual identities. Teachers also downplayed individual identities in other subtle ways. For example, instructions to specific children were often diffused by replacing a child’s name with a generic term like \textit{o le tama lale} - the boy over there, or \textit{o le teine i tua} - the girl at the back. Similarly, the unwillingness of teachers to engage on a one-to-one basis with students and the limited use of direct praise (i.e. to a named child) served to downplay individual identities.

When students were directed to do written work, teachers generally positioned themselves at their desk. Sometimes they stood on the veranda or in the doorway from where they could view the class. Few teachers circulated and engaged with students about their work. Communication to students tended to be behaviour-related and uni-directional (not require or receive a response). Exchanges often took the form of question-answer sequences. Sometimes a teacher passed a child at a desk and asked a question like, “\textit{O fea lau peni?}” (Where’s your pen?), “\textit{Ua a? Ua fai le aso?}” (Well? Have you put in the date?) or “\textit{O le a le mea tou te pisa ai?}” (What are you (plural) making a noise for?). Whilst these sentences were phrased as questions, responses were seldom expected or given.

\textsuperscript{129}Refer to Appendices x and xi for examples of tracking sheets. Tracking information was based on five-minute time slots. This proved inadequate as teachers or students sometimes moved onto a new activity within the five-minute time slot. In such cases plotting was based on the main activity during the five-minute period.

\textsuperscript{130}When using the recently developed PEMP booklets some teachers sat at a student chair or table and instructed students on the mat. In these contexts, teachers used PEMP booklets like a blackboard. Students collectively read extracts and instructions and then proceeded to their desks for written work. Sometimes deskwork was preceded by a pair or group activity.
Teachers tended to look at students' work retrospectively rather than in process. As discussed in the previous chapter, when teachers requested students to line up with their books, students crouched, knelt or sat in line, physically exhibiting deferential behaviours to the higher status teacher. Students maintained these positions unless directed to look at their book with the teacher. Even beside the teacher, students maintained a respectful distance and deferential posture. For the most part, teachers marked student books without discussion and beyond ready viewing. More frequently, books were collected for marking at a later date (i.e. without the student present). Again there was no engagement with students about what they were doing, how they were doing and how they could do better.

Several students who had spent time overseas were sharply critical of the lack of engagement with students about their learning. One rural student (Rst2) noted, "Manaia faiaoga i fafo. Alu atu le faiaoga e taamilo e siaki uma mea aoga a tamaiti." (The teachers overseas are good. They move about checking all the students’ work - Rst2.) She then added, "I nei (pause), tele o faiaoga e nfonofo i latou tesi. ... E paie. E le pei o faiaoga i fafo. E toaga. E alu e fai mea aoga a tamaiti, e fesoasoani. Telē le fesoasoani." (Here [in Samoa] there are lots of teachers who just sit at their desk. They are lazy. They’re not like teachers overseas. They’re conscientious. They go and do [help] students with their work. They’re a big help.) Her classmate (Rst1) compared New Zealand teachers to a mother:

\[O le faiaoga e pei o se tina. A leaga a latou galuega e sau e fesoasoani i tamaiti ma faatonu latou galuega ia lelei. O le mea e tupu i Samoa, a sese e faatonutoni (mai lumai) e fai faalelei a latou galuega. (The [i.e. New Zealand] teacher is like a mother. When their work [the students] is bad she comes and helps the children and directs/guides their work so it is good [correct]. If it’s wrong in Samoa [the teacher] tells them to do their work properly [i.e. does not show].)\]

Students did not approach teachers about their needs and concerns. When a student did not have a pencil, rubber or ruler, they discretely negotiated with peers. When there were altercations between students in the classroom both parties endeavoured to hide the interaction from the teacher. Occasionally a peer would alert the teacher to what was happening. Over a six-week period at Viliamu school, staff shared lunch provided by the village. During the lunch break students interacted with friends and played. Sometimes a young staff child or relation would hang about the door waiting to be noticed or with body lowered and head down, discretely approach the teacher concerned. However, it was extremely rare for other students to approach staff during this time with student-related
concerns. When and if this did happen the incident was invariably serious (e.g. senior students fighting) and the culprits punished.

Similarly, there was relatively little informal engagement between teachers and students. It was unusual to see a child spontaneously approach a teacher to share their work or personal news. Likewise, it was rare to see a child approach and request a teacher to intercede on their behalf. Students sought out peers or siblings when wanting to share something of personal interest, needing an item or seeking help to resolve conflicts. Later in this chapter, I argue that the lack of interaction between teachers and students reflects core cultural beliefs about adults and children and appropriate interaction between them.

Some students were more comfortable than others to engage with teachers. These were almost always high achievers. Several urban parents and teachers linked high achievement with aiga lelei - good families and aiga mau oloa - socioeconomically advantaged families. By contrast a child from an aiga vaivai - weak/lowly/poor family was more likely to hold back. 

A faasaua le le o ma lona (i.e. teacher’s) faatinoga, o le a töto e le faiāoga i le mafaufau o le tamaititi le fefe. Vagana le tamaititi va tupuna i se aiga atamamai. E le maua le mea na. E fa atu, ‘Faiāoga, faiāoga! O le a le mea lea?’ (If the teacher’s voice and expressions are harsh he/she will plant fear in the child’s mind. Except for the child that grows up in an intelligent/clever/educated family. He/she won’t be affected by that. He/she will say, ‘Teacher, teacher! What is this?’) He then adds that for the weak child “Ua motu lona avanoa ia pototo, aua, ua fefe” (The weak child has missed the chance to become clever because he/she is afraid - RT3).

O isi tamaiti, pei o tamaiti maualalo pei e fefe. Pei e iloa e lē lelei le aiga. Ae o isi e confident. E lelei le aiga. (Some children - like poor children it’s as if they’re scared. It’s like they know that their family is lowly/not good. But others are confident. The family is good - UT5.)

In Samoa, an individual’s sense of self and worth is intimately linked to the larger group (i.e. immediate family, extended family, village, etc.) (Liu 1991; Mageo 1998). The family is an extension of the child and the child is an extension of the family. When a child behaves badly or a family member commits a crime or behaves in an unbecoming manner the whole family is potentially shamed. This is epitomised in the way that offences are dealt with in rural Samoa. When an individual breaks village rules the family rather than the individual is fined by the fono - village council. Likewise in an ifoga - traditional formal apology, family members abase themselves on behalf of the family member who has caused the offence.
Members of the extended family, headed by matai – chiefs, sit with heads down and covered by fine mats in front of the home of the offended party. Conversely when someone achieves well and acts in an admirable way the family, village, district, etc. feels proud.

The idea that self worth is intimately linked to one’s family has major implications in a school context. Writing in reference to the Pacific, Ewalt and Makuau (1995) suggest that when a group or family is powerless this simultaneously reduces the power of individual members to exercise personal authority and agency. This is consistent with Schoeffel’s observation that those in low status positions are more likely to accept “the rules of self-effacement and the futility of attempts at individual achievement” (Schoeffel 1979: 125). When a child is raised in a disempowered family, the child observes adult members of the family modelling deference and self-effacement. By contrast the child born into a high status family (e.g. the child of a church minister, holder of a senior matai title, person employed in a position of responsibility) observes adults asserting their authority. This was beautifully illustrated in an urban Year 1 class. A sturdy five-year-old stood out amongst his classmates. In a deep voice he parroted teacher instructions, scolded and organised classmates and regularly reported to the teacher what was happening in the room. My suspicion was confirmed. The child was a son of an important fa'afeau - church minister (i.e. held a high status position within Samoan society). Significantly, family status and the earned status of a high achiever appeared to enable some students to feel that they had right to teacher time and a voice within the classroom. This is consistent with faa Samoa where those of high status have right to speak their mind, assert their authority and define meaning (Duranti 1988; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Singh 2000; Huffer and So’o 2001).

Students, parents and teachers gave a range of explanations as to why students did not approach teachers and expect teacher time. Many linked school behaviour to patterns of child-adult relationships in the home. All groups stated that the teacher is like a parent and vice versa.

O ou matua muamua, o ou matua i le fale. Ae sau i le aoga, o le faiaga o le matua lona lua. ... A le faatoum e le faiaga, e leaga le mea e oo i ai. E oo foi i matua. E leai se esesega o faiaga ma matua. (Your first parents are your parents at home. But when you come to school, the teacher is your second parent. ... If the teacher doesn’t direct/order [the child] bad things will happen. It’s the same for parents. There is no difference between teachers and parents - Rst1.)
Implied is an expectation that the teacher will relate to the child as a parent (i.e. ensure that the child knows how to behave appropriately) and that the child in turn will relate to the teacher as a parent (i.e. show deference, respect and obedience). Both students and teachers are profoundly influenced in their relationship by their beliefs and understandings about how children and their parents/elders should relate. This perspective was strongly expressed by a rural parent (RP5) who desired that his child:

> Ia iloa le faaalalo i tagata la e matua ia ia. Ae sili ona faaalalo i le faiaoga. Ia usitai i le faiaoga e pei o lona usitai i lona matua. (Show respect to people who are older than her. But most of all to show respect to the teacher. To obey the teacher in the same way that she obeys her parents.)

When asked why children do not approach the teacher for assistance or engage in prolonged conversation some participants attributed this to relationships at home.

> Ea foi. Ua tupu i le aiga. O lona fefe mai i na. Sa ne ’i tautala. Sau la ia e nofonofono i le faiaoga. Aua ne ’i tautala. (Yes well [loose translation]. It happens in the family. That’s where the fear comes from. Forbidden to talk. He/She comes to school and just sits/doesn’t do anything. Doesn’t [dare to] talk - RT2.)

> Tutusa o le olaga na i tua i le aiga. A talanoa matua ma nisi tagata ese, e faatonu i tamaiti e o ese. (That’s what life is like in the family. If parents are talking with other people [implied - with adults], they tell the children to go away - RT5.)

> Ia te a’u, e aafia. E le lava latou talanoa. E le lava latou manatu e faaali mai. Ona e faasa. Faasa e matua ona faaali latou manatu, poo le mea la e manao ai le tamaititi. O le faaSamoa na. O mai i le aoga, fesili atu le faiaoga, e le mafai ona faaali lona manatu. Talu ai la (pause), e maufa i lona aiga. E le lava se mafutaga, pei o se talatalanoai, fefunafu i totonu o aiga. ... Ona faaali mai lea, e fefe. (From my perspective [they - i.e. the children] are affected. They don’t talk enough. They don’t express their thoughts enough. Because they’re not allowed to. Their parents don’t let them express their thoughts. Or what the child wants/desires. That’s the faaSamoa. They bring it to school and when the teacher asks a question they are not able to express themselves. Because (pause) it starts from home. There’s not enough time spent together [referring to children and adults], like talking to each other, sharing in the family - RT1.)

The teacher then elaborates that when the child arrives at school he/she is hesitant to express his/her thoughts and feelings. They are afraid to say something to the teacher in case they get

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131 A number of participants specifically stated that if there were tagata ese - visitors (literally different people, i.e. not part of the household/close family) talking with adults, children should not intrude into the conversation and adult space.
it wrong. Several participants raised the idea that some cultural values might simultaneously be cherished and problematic, depending on the physical and social context.

_E manaia le mea o le fāaaloalo, o le usita'i, o le lo tomatoesalalo. Ae la e i ai mea e influence le life o le tamaititi pe a taofi le ola i mea tau aoga. E o tamaiti e talanoa ma tamaiti. E le o mai tagata matutua e talanoa ma tamaiti. E talanoa tagata matua ma tagata matua._ (Respect, obedience and humility are good. But it impacts [influences] on the life of the child if it stops their school progress. Children go off and talk to children. Adults don’t [come and] talk to children. Adults talk to adults - RT2.)

A number of participants from each group talked about families being different in the way they interacted. One teacher (RT6) stated emphatically that in their family:

_Ua mafai ona matou talatalanoa, fesilisilialai. Pe e i ai se mea. A ta vaai i si a 'u tama ua (pause), ou te fesili i ai. O le a le mea ua faapea ai lou foliga? ... E faamatala. O le taimi lena e avatu se tala i ai. (We can chat to each other, ask each other things. If there is something. If I see that my child is (pause), I ask her. Why are you looking like that? ... She tells me. That’s the time to say something [implied - give parental advice] to them.)_

In a New Zealand middle-class white family, love implies closeness/intimacy, which in turn suggests verbal engagement. In Samoa, people talked about family closeness in different kinds of ways. Love often implied willingness to serve, look after, defer and display respect to those older than oneself (Gerber 1975; Gerber 1985; Mageo 1998). An urban parent expressed this idea succinctly when she talked about her relationship with her parents.

_O Samoa ia (pause), o matua e kolousi tele ma le fanau. Ta iloa i aso nei. A 'o aso la, o matou i matua (pause), o le fāaaloalo ia, i matua. Soo se mea e fai mai e le tina, ou te le taitai tali atu ia ia. Nao lo 'u tu lava i luga ma aumai le feau la e manao i ai le tina pō le tama. (In Samoa, parents are very close to children. I don’t know about today. But in the old days, towards our parents (pause), [we] respected our parents. Anything my [Samoan version - the] mother said, I would never reply back to her. I’d just stand up and do/get whatever my father or mother wanted - UP3.)_

Likewise a colleague observed that young and old may say very little but there is often deep affection and feelings of closeness. “You know they have been serving and in the eyes of somebody else it could be seen as a real servitude thing. Serving, serving, serving, but when you look at those children they really do love their grandparents. And there might not be much talk there but I guess it’s just about the presence. ... They want to be the ones that bring

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132 These ideas are explored in more detail later in the chapter.
the *apa faafano* (basin to wash their hand in) and they want to be the ones that do all these small tasks” - Edex2.

Teachers recognised that some children do not feel comfortable when they try to converse with them. Several adults recalled walking in the other direction when they saw a teacher approaching them. Others recalled feeling paralysed when a teacher stood behind them observing them work. “Because you know Samoan kids. I’m talking of my own experience. I would never concentrate on what I’m doing if the teacher is hanging around my table. Oh, you know - did I get it right? You know Samoan kids are so concerned about making sure everything is right” - Edex1.

Some teachers expressed frustration that students did not readily contribute to discussions and ask questions. “*O tamaiti i lo’u vasega e te fiu e foi atu i ai. Ae na’o le faalogo a. E foi e faatautala. Ae leai. O lo’u manatu e tatau ona aumai ma talanoa. E taumafai e faatautala.*” (Children in my class - you get sick of trying to engage them. But [they] just listen. You get sick of trying to make them talk. Nothing happens. From my perspective it’s good to bring them [come together] and talk. To try and talk/open up - UT5.) In some cases the tone, content and body language of the teacher did not encourage dialogue. In other instances students chose not to respond suggesting that both students and teachers shaped the nature and quality of their relationships and the nature and quality of the learning experiences in classrooms.

Two teachers (RT3 and RT2) argued strongly that student-teacher interactions were profoundly influenced by *faaSamoan* and that this worked against MESC’s efforts to introduce new pedagogies. “*O le mea faigata o le agamu. O le aumaiga o le agamu ma le aumai i inei (i le faleaoga). Ua le o i ai se suiga fou e seti ai le polokame.*” (The thing that is difficult is the custom. When it is brought in - brought in to here [the school]. There are no changes to enable the programme to happen. [Implied meaning - For as long as these things remain the same the new policy objectives won’t be achieved.] - RT3.) He then proposed that teachers should set aside the *faaSamoan* at school. This statement was fascinating given that the same teacher in other contexts emphatically stated that his primary responsibility was to ensure that students knew how to behave appropriately and that this was the foundation to successful learning.
In a report on an externally funded teacher inservice project Esera (1996) noted that teachers found getting to know students the most challenging objective. Later (personal communication, June 2003) she suggests a link between patterns of relationships and the curriculum. In Samoa the curriculum is tightly defined and closely followed by most teachers. There is little engagement of the teacher as a person (i.e. sharing), little opportunity to personalise subjects and limited involvement of the child as a person. Subjects are formal and distant in content and delivery. For Esera this worked against students and teachers getting to know each other and establishing close relationships. Esera’s position is consistent with Bernstein’s idea that each aspect of school (pedagogy, curriculum and assessment) is intimately linked and feeds into the other (Bernstein 1996).

As discussed in the previous chapter, resourcing and infrastructure (physical and human) dramatically impacted on patterns of relationships. In 2002 only two-third of schools met the policy target of one teacher per 30 students at the primary level (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003). One fieldwork school had 46 students in a junior class. Maternity leave and teacher shortages meant that for most of the school year at least one teacher covered two classes. In one instance this left one teacher responsible for 85 students for three months. High student-teacher ratios made it difficult for teachers to engage on a one-to-one basis with students about their learning. Classrooms were also poorly resourced. Except for PEMP materials, teachers did not have access to student texts and/or resource books, copying facilities and quality readers. In this context, teaching programmes depended directly on human resources (i.e. teachers and students). Large student numbers combined with limited resources worked against both group and individualised activities and one-to-one and/or small group interactions.

Some teachers show greater interest in some groups of students and less in others

In almost all fieldwork classrooms, students were seated according to their achievement in recent tests or exams. In some instances students sat in rows, with the top students at the front and the bottom students at the rear. In the majority of classrooms students sat in five or six groups. The two top groups were generally found at the front with the weakest groups at the rear. In classes, where there was a shortage of furniture, weak students invariably sat at low (knee height tables) or on the mat area.
In some classrooms, teachers varied in the way they interacted with different groups of students. Bookwork of weak students was less likely to be marked or corrected. As noted by Va’a (1987a; 1987b) teachers were more likely to include students seated at the front in verbal exchanges. When and if teachers circulated around the classroom, they were more likely to engage with able students about their work (discursive pedagogy). Interactions with low achieving students tended to relate to behaviour and take on the form of directives (regulative pedagogy). At no time did a teacher bend or sit in order to discuss work with students working at lower levels (i.e. low tables or mat). To do so would have been seen as inappropriate by both students and teachers.

As discussed in the previous chapter, space and people’s position within space convey important meanings in Samoa. Centre and front areas are associated with high status persons, visibility and a sense of audience, appropriate, and formal behaviour. By contrast, peripheral and back areas are associated with lower status individuals, mundane everyday activities, informal interactions and the darker side of human nature (Shore 1982; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Duranti 1992; Duranti 1994). Of relevance to this discussion is that students’ physical location in the classroom made implicit statements about who they were (high versus low achievers) and largely determined the nature, quality and frequency of student-teacher interactions.

Formal teaching almost always occurred at the blackboard at the front of the classroom. When students remained at their desks, able students were positioned closest to the board. Location within the classroom impacted on interaction patterns. Students seated in periphery and back areas of the classroom were less likely to ask questions or approach a teacher. Teachers in turn were more likely to initiate interactions with students in front and middle areas of the classroom (i.e. high and average achievers). Brown found that Pacific students in New Zealand schools often chose to sit at the back of the room. He concluded, “Even sitting at the back of the room, not speaking in class, not seeking assistance from teachers (all behaviours normally associated with low achievement) can be understood as culturally appropriate ways of showing respect” (1995: 65). What Brown failed to note was that the spatial position (in this case chosen by the student) carried subtle messages as to who they were, their status in the classroom, their rights to speak, to give an opinion, and to claim teacher time.
A core cultural value in Samoa is to ‘tu i lou tulaga’ - stand in your (rightful) place, to behave in ways that are appropriate to your position. As noted earlier, children’s sense of self is intimately linked to their family. Children transfer the demeanours of the wider family group to the school context. Within the classroom, self-effacement and deference translate into an unwillingness to initiate interactions, put themselves forward, claim teacher time, and ask questions. It is interesting to consider the implications for students when low family status combines with poor achievement. The physical positioning of the student to periphery areas of the classroom further confirms and entrenches their disempowered status.

In interviews, several teachers stated that they sat the weak students at the back of the classroom to keep an eye on them. “O tamaiti foi lea o tamaiti e sili ona ulavavale. O tamaiti e vaivai le mafaufau e leai se galuega e fai.” (These children are the most mischievous children. Children who are slow/weak learners don’t do any work - UT1.) The teacher then elaborates that she seats these children close by her desk (i.e. at the back) in order to mei atu i ai - spring over to them (implied - keep an eye on them). The intent and nature of the interaction is regulative (i.e. about controlling behaviour) rather than discursive (i.e. about the students’ learning). Teachers, parents and students believed that behavioural traits largely determined academic success. In interviews poor achievement was associated with being ulavale - mischievous, faatamala - irresponsible, le toaga - not conscientious/hard working, le usitai - not obedient and le faalogo - not listening/not attending. Teachers responded to low performing students by focusing on their behaviour. According to one urban teacher (UT3): “Aua lava ne'i tia tamaiti vaivai. la ta tracinga latou amio. Aua o le isi na mea e ala ona vaivai tamaiti, o le tunfaio.” (Don’t throw weak children away. Instead trace [keep a track] of their [implied - uncontrolled] behaviour. Because that’s the other reason children are weak, being left unsupervised.) Hence teachers tended to use regulative strategies (i.e. behaviour focused) in response to students with strong discursive (instructional) needs. Few teachers engaged with weak students in sustained one-to-one interactions about their schoolwork.

Many of the attitudes and interaction patterns associated with low achieving students within classrooms were evident in lower stream classes. In Viliamu School, teachers commented that C stream children frequently came from poorer, socially disadvantaged homes. C stream

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133 In large urban schools students are placed according to exam performance in A, B, C etc. streams.
teachers commented on students' poor achievement, poor attendance, the range of ability within the class and how difficult their work was. Again student performance was linked to personal qualities. One urban teacher described C stream children as "amio puaa" - having the behaviour of pigs and "le pulea" - without control (implied meaning - not knowing how to behave). Several teachers talked about adapting their teaching to the students. For one teacher (UT3) this meant not worrying about their understanding. Instead she worried about whether they had tidy handwriting. For others it meant teaching almost exclusively in Samoan. For another it meant restricting curriculum coverage to mostly language areas and some Maths. One teacher educator commented that often the less experienced and less respected teacher was placed in the C stream class. From her perspective C stream teachers showed less interest in their students because they felt undervalued and labelled by their placement. Such teachers felt "E le tawā latou galuega (Their work is not important.) You feel that you're not important" - Edexl.

In Samoa all interviewed teachers recognised that students came from varied backgrounds and that this impacted on students as learners. Many also acknowledged that this influenced how some teachers went about their work. Consistently parents and students commented that some teachers did not show the same level of interest and commitment towards children from homes that were perceived as "faatauva" - lowly/unimportant/humble or "mati" - poor. These teachers were seen as paying more attention towards children from high status or wealthy families and sometimes acting inappropriately (e.g. by lifting student grades, changing exam results, etc.) in the hope of gaining material reward and recognition.

"Ia, o le alofa ma aoao faalelei le tamaititi lea e maua ai le tupe, e fai faleoloa. Ia o le tamaititi la e mati, e leaga, e le aoao i ai. ... E leai se mea e fai. A le iloa se mea - e le iloa (laughs). ([The teacher] loves and teaches properly the child who has money, owns a shop. But the child who is poor, they don’t teach properly. ... They don’t do anything [i.e. they ignore the child]. [Alternative translation - [The child] does not do anything.] If [the child] doesn’t know anything - they still won’t know anything (laughs) - RP1.)

"O le mea la e fai e le faaogaoa, a tau i le tamaititi mati, pei e faatauvaianai. Ae tau i le tamaititi mau mea, o le tamaititi na e sili atu (not audible) latou taimi. (Some teachers when they come to a poor student they fail to give him/her any attention. But when they come to the well off child, that’s the child that [not audible] they give their time too - RP4.)

Another rural parent (RP5) commented that some teachers focus on clever children but ignore the child who is "poua" - poor, and "isu pe" - has a runny nose (implied meaning - unhealthy,
Town teachers and several parents recognised that parental status and perceived parental values impacted on how teachers disciplined students. Teachers knew that well-educated, well travelled, half-caste, and *palagi* - European parents were more likely to challenge teachers if they hit or verbally abused their children. More traditional parents were unlikely to question the authority and actions of the teacher. Several participants suggested that some teachers were anxious to provide a good programme when parents had political or social clout. “The teacher is scared of the doctor and the pastor. If it is the child of a person of high status - the doctor, the lawyer, the pastor, the teacher treats the child more carefully, takes more care to see that they deliver a better quality programme. They (i.e. the parents) might arrive at school and complain” - Edexl.

*Teacher interaction with some students includes shaming, verbal put downs and threats*

In the case study, the teacher belittles one group, labelling it as stupid. She also uses praise sparingly. In a small percentage of classrooms shaming, labelling and threatening children were entrenched. Sioa (1997) recalls working in the Malifa Compound and constantly hearing children “being sworn at, berated and occasionally slapped.” She wonders “what dreadful things these youngsters have committed to earn the ire of a particular teacher” (ibid.: 89). Like corporal punishment, language is an area of contestation. Instructors on a recent MESC inservice programme repeatedly urged teachers to abandon harsh, authoritative and shaming language. In 2002, the National Council of Women produced an Australian-funded video encouraging parents to reduce their use of physical punishment and *upu mamafa/upu faifai/upu pona* - negative/heavy/fault finding/shaming language. The video was repeatedly shown on the national television channel.

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134 During a four-week period at two urban fieldwork schools, there were two instances of staff facing charges relating to hitting children. In each case one of the parents had been educated overseas.

135 In the last two decades, parent-funded private schools have begun to provide an alternative for students and families who are uncomfortable with government school culture, resourcing and pedagogies. This has removed from government schools a cross-section of students and parents whose lifestyles and values differ in significant ways from other Samoan families. Rather than agitate for change within the government system, parents have searched out and supported alternatives.

136 On my second fieldwork trip in 2003 I attended three inservice workshops. These were part of the Primary Teachers Inservice Training Programme.
Parents and teachers saw shame language, use of threats and verbal put-downs as common socialisation tools. However, their opinions varied as to their effects. Some believed that shame language, threats and put-downs negatively affected the child.

*Ou te iloa e i ai le aafia ga.* E aafia. Manatua o le tamaititi o le mea pue. E pue mea uma. O le uiga o le tala lea (pause), o le a avea (pause) pei o le a tuu i le mafau fau o le tamaititi lea. (Pause) E faapea, 'Ua lau e lo 'u tama lo 'u soso.' E i ai le mea o le a tupu i lona mafau fau i upu na fai. Pei, 'Ou te soso'. E te le aafia ga. E aafia ana aoga. (I know there is an effect/impact. There’s an effect. Remember the child is [like] a camera [literal - catches things]. They catch [take on board] everything. What I am saying [pause], it will cause [pause], like the child will put it in his mind. [Pause]. [The child] will think, ‘My father says I’m stupid.’ Something will grow in the child’s mind from those words. Like, ‘I am stupid.’ It will have a big effect. It will affect their schoolwork - UT5.)

E aafia. E aafia lona taumafai. O le a faavaivai le tamaititi. La e faapea, ‘Ua fai mai lo ‘u tina poo lo ‘u fai aoga ou te valea. ’Ia, o le a tuu i lona mafau fau, o ia ua valea. A sau i le aoga e le o i ai sone mafau fau tele fai e aaoa, e maua le poto. ... Tahu ai le faalogo so o i le tala e valea tele ia. (It has an impact. It affects [the willingness] to try. The child will be disheartened [literally - weakened]. She will think, ‘My mother of teacher says I’m stupid.’ So/yes, the thought is put in the child’s mind that she is stupid. When she comes to school her thoughts do not focus on learning in order to become clever. ... Because she has been told all the time that she’s stupid - RT5.)

Parent and teacher (RT3) believed that “E mamana upu” (Words have power). Through the act of saying something it comes into being. For others, words were merely words and had little impact. In response to whether the common phrase, ‘E ese lou valea’ - ‘You are so stupid’, impacted on children several parents stated:

*E leai. O tamaititi ua masani i lena. Tusa o se huitau latou te mafau fau, ia iloa le sese. Sei vagana ni upu mamafai poo ni upu palauvale. E le fetaui. (No. Children are used to that. It’s like a challenge for them to think, so they know what’s wrong. Except harsh words or swear words. They’re not right - UP3.)

E te iloa, e le aafia. E le ano i ai le tamaititi. Fai atu le tala, pe la e fai i le tua o le pato. O le tamaititi ia. E le mamafai i le tamaititi. (You know, it doesn’t have any effect. The child doesn’t care about it. When you say it, it’s like saying it to the back of a duck [i.e. like water off a duck’s back]. The child’s. The child doesn’t care - RP2.)

Some students, parents and teachers recognised that words affect some children but not others. Several commented that if a child was raised with harsh language they became impervious to it whereas the same words cut deeply into another child’s mind and feelings.
O isi matua e fai atu, ‘E i ai sou fai'ai? Poo fea le mea e tu ai lou fai'ai? O le isi tama'iti e sau i le aoga ae mafauvau i le tala na. (Some parents say, ‘Do you have a brain?’ ‘Where does your brain stand [literal]?’ Some children might come to school and think about what was said – Rst1.)

The student then adds that it doesn’t bother her when her mother says, “Teu lou faiai” (Tidy your brain - Rst1). She merely laughs to herself.

E aafia le isi tama'iti. Ae o le isi tama'iti e masani ia i na ote. E a foi, o le isi tama'iti e le masani i le ote lea. O lona uiga ua aafia. Ae afa i se tama'iti ua masani i le faile i le ote lea ua iu ua faia a, ua faia a, ua leai se mea. Ua masani ia, ua leai se mea ua tupu. (Another child is affected. But another child might be used to that kind of scolding. Mm-yes [expression], the other child is not used to this scolding. For that reason [they are] affected. But if it is a child who is used to being told off in the home, you can keep on and on and on doing it/saying it but it has no effect. [The child] is used to it. Nothing happens - RT6.)

One rural teacher (RT4) commented that in her family she and her husband were careful about what they said to their two sons and how they said it. She recalled the younger son coming to her classroom crying because his teacher had told him off and used upu mafafa - heavy/harsh words. Several days later he again arrived in her room crying because the teacher had hit the blackboard sharply with a stick. The teacher laughed and contrasted her son’s softness with girls in his class who when hit did not cry. She also noted that some children were so familiar with upu mafafa and threats that they only moved when teachers addressed them in such a manner. Several things are evident here. Firstly, child-adult interactions at home influence how children respond and interact with teachers (and other students) at school. Secondly, students’ expectations of teachers, and students’ responses to teacher actions influence what teachers say, how they say it, what teachers do and how they go about doing it. Thirdly, teachers sometimes feel that they have to take on a persona and act in ways that might not be consistent with their personal beliefs.

Participants from all groups referred to some teachers using shaming language. Shaming, mockery and teasing are important socialisation tools in Samoa (Schoeffel 1979; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Mageo 1998; Vaipae 1999), which create a child who is self-effacing, lotomaulalo - modest (Schoeffel and Meleisea, 1996), ma-interpersonally shy (Mageo 1991) and sensitive to social approval. Mageo notes that to be self-effacing, not put oneself forward and to be reticent in one’s relationships are seen as culturally appropriate behaviours. However, in the context of the classroom, these behaviours may work against a student feeling comfortable about approaching a teacher for assistance,
asking questions, contributing to discussions, or asserting an opinion. This was true for a young adult colleague, who recalled being constantly teased and shamed as a child with phrases like, “Mā lau fee.” (expression used to shame a child: literal translation - Shame your octopus) and “E leaga lou ulu?” (expression used when someone does something silly/inappropriate: literal translation - Is your head bad?). For this young adult these experiences had made her anxious about making a fool of herself, interpersonally shy and hesitant about taking risks.

A number of students, parents and teachers suggested that fear of being shamed, teachers using a harsh voice or strong words and fear of physical punishment could create emotions that were so intensely felt that they blocked students’ ability to learn. One rural teacher stated:

*O isi tamaiti e le mafai ona lagona mai se mea, pe a leo tele atu le faiaoga. O isi tamaiti a pa’o se mea e fefe loa, ua le mafai.* (Some children can’t hear/attend/take anything on board if the teacher uses a loud voice. Other children are afraid and can’t do anything if there’s a big noise - RT4.)

Other participants talked about their mind becoming *fefilo* – muddled, and being unable to do anything/take anything on board.

*There is limited use of praise*

In classrooms praise was used sparingly. Teachers used a limited range of praise words (e.g. *manaia* - well done, *manaia tele* - very well done, *lelei* - good, *lelei tele* - very good, *sao* – correct). Praise tended to be general in content (e.g. *manaia* - well done) rather than specific and detailed. (For example, “You’ve written a great story. I like the way you describe the colours of the small reef fish.”) Praise was frequently general in direction (i.e. no specific student named). These observations are consistent with Sutter’s (1980) observations in a rural pastor school, where the generalised *lelei* – good seemed more “a judgement about the correctness of the answer that an appraisal of the person who answers” (ibid.: 47).

Most parents and teachers expressed the belief that too much praise is not good for a child and might lead to a child becoming *mimita* - a show off and unmotivated in their work. Parents use praise sparingly in socialisation (Sutter 1980; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1998; Odden and Rochat 2004). Sofia in *My Shade of Brown* (Mulitalo 2001) recalls how her mother never praised her. Instead she focused on all the things that she did not do well in the belief “that it would make me a strong person” (ibid.: 91). In interviews, parents frequently
stated that loving parents do not indulge their child or accommodate their whims. Several stated that some children do not do well at school and in life because their parents praised and indulged them.

Pei e faaviivii i taimi uma. Pei e tasi lena mea ua ave ai ma mea ua le lelei le aoga a ist tamaiti. ... Ua faalogo mai le tamaitiiiti ua praise atu. Ae manatua foi (pause), o matua Samoa ia, e nana lou alofa. Aua le faafaha. E nana. E nana lou alofa. E taumafai e alofa, ae nana lou alofa. A ea. Aua le faaali lou alofa. O i na isi auala e le to e ano ai le tamaitiiiti. (It’s like they flatter/praise/compliment them all the time. I think that’s one of the reasons that some children don’t do well at school. ... The child hears themselves getting praised. But remember (pause) Samoan parents hide their love. Don’t show it. Hide it. Hide your love, Try to love but hide your love. A ea. [Expression seeking agreement from listener.] Don’t show your love. That’s the other reason children take no notice/don’t care - UT5.)

The loving parent corrects, guides, instructs and disciplines their children. In this way the Samoan child is socialised into values and behaviours of falaaloalo - respect, usitai - obedience, tautua - service, knowing one’s place, and loto faamaualalo - humility/deference (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991; Va’a 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Singh, Dooley et al. 2001). Thus the good teacher and parent shape the child’s amio - behaviour and create a child who knows how to behave appropriately and is ultimately affirmed by the wider community.

Synopsis of student-teacher interactions

A number of interesting points emerge from the analysis of student-teacher interactions. Firstly, despite individual differences between teachers and between students, strong interaction patterns and behaviours were apparent. Secondly, some teachers attempted to change interaction ‘rules’. Hence in one class the new rule became ‘e sa le le fesili’ - it is forbidden not to ask. Thirdly, certain students (especially those from socially advantaged families or high achievers) were more likely to bend ‘rules’ and assume a right to teacher time and interest.

Fourthly, students, parents and teachers used heavily emotional, affect-laden terms to explain students’ behaviour in the classroom. Fear, shame, and embarrassment were constant themes. All participants believed that these emotions impacted on the student-teacher relationship. Some believed that they had a negative impact on students’ learning. Conversely others believed that fear, shame, and embarrassment were at times useful emotions and could contribute to successful learning. Fifthly, both students and teachers shaped the nature and
quality of their interaction and in so doing profoundly influenced the nature and quality of teaching and learning. Finally, a strong continuity emerged between interaction patterns at home and at school. Participants repeatedly stated that teachers are like parents and that student-teacher interactions, student and teacher dispositions and behaviours are influenced by child-adult relationships in the *aiga* - family.

Although student-teacher relationships were typified by distance it would be wrong to assume that fieldwork schools were miserable places and that teachers did not care about students and were uninterested in their work. Students for the most part stated that they enjoyed school, their teachers and learning. A minority of teachers appeared uninterested in their work and in the students. Many teachers were emphatic that they enjoyed teaching and loved their students and for the most part, this was evident in their practice. Some teachers showed genuine concern about students in their care and their home circumstances. One teacher (UT4) talked about feeling sorry when she knew that some children arrived at school without breakfast and added that she frequently shared her lunch with a hungry child. Another (RT4) referred to a child disclosing that her father had been drunk and hit her mother. She then offered the child advice. Another teacher (UT5) referred to slipping 20 cents to a child who did not have any lunch. An older male teacher (RT3) talked about the importance of infant teachers encouraging and affirming new entrants so that they felt comfortable to approach teachers, raise their hand and ask questions.

I suggest that for the most part teachers’ distance and lack of engagement with students are not because teachers are lazy, unmotivated or unprofessional. Instead I suggest that distance and lack of engagement between students and teachers are consistent with core cultural values, beliefs and understandings about how adults and children should interact with each other. These ideas are explored further in the next section.

**Socialisation patterns**

Most formal learning (particularly when schools are poorly resourced) occurs in the context of the student-teacher relationship. Each set of participants in the relationship brings to the interaction a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and preferred practices that impact on how they interpret the other, how they see themselves, how they read the context and how they respond.
Socialisation is the process by which adults initiate children into socially sanctioned attitudes, values, beliefs, patterns of relationships, practices and world-views. We can gain insight into teacher-student relationships through an investigation into socialisation patterns and adult-child relationships.

Mission, colonial, and more recent global flows (e.g. in the form of educational aid, migration in and out of Samoa, travel, television, and video) have contributed to increasing social and cultural diversification. In particular, socialisation patterns are undergoing rapid change and there is increasing debate as to what constitutes good parenting (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001b). This is epitomised by recent media attention on children’s rights and the place of physical discipline. Material circumstances, technological change, family structure, family size, employment patterns in households, income, location, exposure to life overseas, level of education, religious affiliation, and family status all impact on who socialises whom, socialisation processes and outcomes.

In the following section I summarise existing research on child socialisation in Samoa. The research findings are consistent with my observations during fourteen years of residence and recent fieldwork. However, they represent socialisation patterns more commonly found in village contexts, more traditionally orientated urban families and larger households. Conversely, even in transitional households, aspects of earlier socialisation patterns are evident. Multiple social, economic, cultural and material variables intersect to shape a specific family’s approach to child socialisation.

Aim of Socialisation

A young adult, in defence of her small child’s disrespectful behaviour towards an older family member, stated “E le iloa ana mea la e fa‘i” (She doesn’t know what she is doing). Implied in the statement is that the child is young (i.e. still dominated by amio - impulsive/natural/selfish behaviours) and has not yet learnt socially appropriate ways of behaving (i.e. aga - socially approved dispositions/behaviours). The primary objective in socialisation is that children put aside wilfulness (Sutter 1980; Mageo 1988) and self-interest and “surrender to the common good” (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996: 140). Socialisation aims to ensure that children behave
and interact appropriately, show respect, compliance and deference towards elders and a willingness to serve (Schoeffel 1979; Fairbaim-Dunlop 1981; Baker 1986; Mageo 1988; Ochs 1988; Schoeffel 1996; Tuia 1999; Edwards et al. 2004). Socialisation endeavours “to induce conformity and the acceptance by the child of its place at the lowest level of a hierarchy of social status based on age” (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996: 141).

**Socialisation in a more traditionally orientated household**

In the first months of life an infant is typically indulged, seldom left to cry, experiences close physical contact, is carried or held for extended periods of time, is almost constantly in the presence of others and is exposed to a network of adult caregivers (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Baker 1986; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991). Initially the mother (if not in paid employment) is generally the primary caregiver. Over the next few months a range of older siblings, adolescent and adult caregivers become progressively more involved in the care of the baby. During this time adults tend to talk about, rather than to small babies (Ochs 1988). Similarly small babies and infants are often referred to by gender rather than by name (Schoeffel 1979; Ochs 1988). These patterns are consistent with my observations. Newborn babies are constantly held, rocked, cuddled and when sleeping lain in close proximity to family members. Adults often chatted about the baby, rather than engaged in baby talk with the child. When directing younger caregivers and/or siblings to do something for the baby they almost always used collective terms rather than the infant’s name. Older family members instructed younger members to “Vaai i le tama” (Keep an eye/look out for the boy), “Fai se mea ai mo le teine” (Make some food for the girl). In both instances (talking about, rather than talking to the infant and referring to the infant as part of a generalised group rather than by name) serve to downplay the emerging individuality of the infant.

Schoeffel (1979) describes weaning as a distressing experience for many infants, where adults use a range of strategies from gentle pushing away, teasing, removal, and sometimes smacking. However, the most significant change in socialisation occurs at about two years of age (O’Meara 1990; Mageo 1998). O’Meara describes this as the point where “serious training begins” (ibid.: 77). This period is marked by a significant drop in the amount of attention and explicit affection from adult caregivers and increasing involvement with older

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137 During the fieldwork period (spanning three years) there were two national conferences on children’s rights. 180
siblings/children/adolescents in the household (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Baker 1986; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Mageo 1998).\textsuperscript{138}

Mageo (1991; 1998) proposes that adults use shaming, teasing and scaring as strategies to establish distance between themselves and children. Other writers also focus on shaming and teasing (Schoeffel 1979; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Vaipae 1999), scaring and the threat of physical punishment as important socialisation tools. Sometimes threats eventuate into physical punishment (Schoeffel 1979; Baker 1986; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001b; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Occasionally punishment is severe (ibid.). When children resist adult distancing by crying or throwing tantrums, they are often threatened or punished or exposed to further shaming, teasing or scaring (Mageo 1991; 1998). Again these patterns of socialisation are consistent with my observations whilst living in Samoa and during the fieldwork period. Older siblings, parents, grandparents, other adult relatives and paid caregivers all used teasing, shaming, scaring and less frequently physical punishment in their relationships with small children. However, these relationships were almost always balanced by humour, warmth, affection and physical closeness. There were also significant variations within and between households.

During the fieldwork period, I regularly visited a transitional household (i.e. well-educated, well travelled, high income, living within a fenced freehold property) with young children. In a four-generation household the parents and grandparents spent considerable time with the children and were openly affectionate. However, even in this context teasing, shaming, and threats of punishment were an everyday part of growing up. The youngest child was about 18 months and still breastfeeding. Young, female, adult members of the household unmercifully teased her about still being on the breast saying, "Loomatual Ua ma!" (Old lady! Shame!) and "E! Vaai ia lale. La e susu lava. Leaga ia." (E! [expression of disgust] Look at that [her]. [She] is still feeding. She’s bad [emphasis].)

Several months later a new baby arrived. I watched the same child wander close to the sleeping baby. The mother called out sharply, "Alu ese mai na!" (Go away from there!). The

\textsuperscript{138} It is not uncommon for one child in a family to be indulged and pampered (O’Meara 1990; Mageo 1991; 1998). Over time focus may shift from one child to another.
child did not move away from the baby so she shouts, "Alu ese. E! O le a fasi oe." (Go away! E [expression of exasperation]! You'll be hit.) The adult then turned to me and said, "E ese (emphasis) le leaga o le teine lena." (That girl's so [emphasis] bad.) The adult felt no need to soften the arrival of the new sibling by indulging the two-year-old's feelings. Instead the child was threatened with physical punishment and told sharply to go away. In the presence of the child, the parent then refers to her in the third person using heavily affect laden language; e ese le leaga - (the child) is so bad. Finally, the child is depersonalised into o le teine lena - the girl there/that [that girl]. Again the interaction serves to establish distance between the child and adult and to downplay the child's sense of self.

Adult communication with the young child becomes primarily one of directives (Sutter 1980; Mageo 1991; Duranti 1994; Mageo 1998; Vaipae 1999; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004; Odden and Rochat 2004). Sutter (1980), Duranti (1994) and Mageo (1991; 1998) observed that orders are often general (i.e. not said to anyone in particular) or collective in direction (i.e. said to the group). Sutter (1980) also noted in rural settings a tendency to use redundant orders (i.e. tell children to do something that they were already doing) and question orders (i.e. where an order is phrased as a question but the intention is to remind the child to carry out an earlier directive). Adults seldom preface directives to children with appeasements (e.g. faamolemole - please) and seldom attempt to justify or rationalise the directive. Parents and caregivers also make limited use of praise in their relationships with children (Sutter 1980; Duranti 1986; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Odden and Rochat 2004). Praise within the family tends to be limited, non-specific (e.g. lelei - good, lelei tele - very good), and again general in direction (i.e. specific child not named). Participants believed that too much praise would create a spoilt and wilful/disobedient child. Instead, adults (high status) expected that children (low status) would willingly defer and quickly obey their instructions.

When children resist by displaying musu - unwilling behaviours, adults respond with verbal reprimands, threats, and sometimes physical punishment. Children in many instances respond to physical punishment by taking on a position of deference, bowing their head, and becoming silent. Mageo suggests that this position symbolises a suppression of self and that ultimately, "Children come to avoid asserting their own desires in relations with elders and to affect physical and psychological deference before authority" (Mageo 1998: 66).
Socialisation patterns discourage children from challenging adults (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1981; Mageo 1991; Tavana 1994; Tuia 1999; Vaipae 1999; Singh 2000; Singh and Sinclair 2001). In so doing socialisation patterns instil in the developing child an awareness of hierarchical boundaries. Children learn that those of lower status defer to those of higher status (Shore 1982; Duranti 1984; Huffer and So'o 2001). Increasingly children become hesitant about expressing their personal intentions, likes, dislikes and opinions to higher status or socially distant persons. Hence if an adult relation or friend in New Zealand, asks our Samoa-raised children whether they would like a particular item or opportunity they are often perplexed by the children’s unwillingness to categorically state what they want, like and/or feel. Invariably there are times when our children find themselves committed to an activity against their will because they felt constrained to agree with an adult and are unable to assert their own feelings.

Mageo (1998) notes that children generally respond to parental distancing by showing resistant behaviours or inhibitions. Resistance may take several forms, which include crying, fa’ali’i - willful/resistant, or musu - sullen/unwilling/uncooperative behaviours. Whilst resistant behaviours are generally met with further sanctions, inhibited behaviours (i.e. deference, silence, passiveness) are socially valued. In interviews teachers, parents, and students all identified filemu - quiet/silent/still, usitai - obedient, loto maualalo - humble, and faaaloalo - respectful behaviours as desired traits. Indeed, these traits were also identified as dispositions that led to academic success.

Adult responses to young children are frequently inconsistent (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Shore 1982; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1998). In one instance an adult might laugh at a child’s display of resistance whilst the same behaviour at a different time or context might be punished. Similarly, forward, tautalaititi – cheeky and display behaviours are sometimes laughed at and encouraged by adults but at other times the child is scolded, shamed or teased. Some infants and small children also experience the presence of significant adults as unpredictable. It is not uncommon for a mother to leave a small baby in the care of family members whilst she travels to town, visits another household or does family chores. Small

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139 In fact what is politeness in a Pacific context can be interpreted as rudeness in mainstream white New Zealand culture. Hesitancy to assert one's wishes to a person of higher status (socially appropriate behaviour in
babies and young children may be left with parents, in-laws or siblings for an indefinite period while a parent adjusts to a new baby, visits family, works, and/or travels overseas for work or study commitments. Thus young children often experience primary caregivers as unpredictable in their response and presence. Instead needs are met by a range of adults, older siblings or peers. Hence children establish diffused or generalised attachments to a wide range of caregivers.

The unpredictable nature of adults and the separation between the world of adults and the world of children are strong themes running through Sia Figiel's work (Figiel 1996a; Figiel 1996b). Her novels describe the Samoan world through the eyes of a ten and fourteen-year-old girl respectively. Adults are portrayed as distant, loved and feared. The relationship is one of ambivalence typified by love-hate and respect-fear dichotomies. Communication from adults takes the form of directives and scolding. Samoana and Alofa do not disclose their fears, dreams and aspirations to their parents. Instead, distance from the world of adults is compensated by strong peer and sibling relationships.

In the novel _Where we once belonged_ the main character, Alofa, believes that "Being beaten up is _alofa_ - love. Real love. ... To beat a child is to give her respect, to teach her how to behave, to teach her to be humble, to listen, to obey, to love her" (Figiel 1996b). Alofa doubts whether her American Peace Corps teacher really cares for them and really loves them when she praises indiscriminately and does not direct, discipline or punish wayward class-members. In the end Alofa acknowledges that they rather miss Mrs Samasoni who rules her class with an iron fist.

Mageo (1998) suggests that distancing strategies and unpredictable adult responses create in children a distrust of, and hesitancy to engage in, close interpersonal relations with adults and contribute to a heightened sensitivity to hierarchical boundaries. Other ethnographers also suggest that children experience parents and other adults as somewhat removed and distant (Sutter 1980; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Mageo 1998; Vaipae 1999; Odden and Rochat 2004). Adults generally do not engage in prolonged conversation with children (Nichol 1985; Ochs 1988; Nabobo 1998; Sauvao, Mapa et al. 2000). Indeed

Samoa) is misinterpreted as ambivalence towards an adult’s generosity in a _palagi_ - European (Pacific Rim) setting.
Sutter (1980) suggests that to do so is degrading for the higher status adult. Similarly, adults tend not to involve themselves with children’s interactions, altercations and activities. Ochs describes the higher ranking caregiver as “somewhat detached” (1988: 84) from children and their activities and suggests that this is both expected and appropriate to their status.

Mageo (1991; 1998) and Gerber (1985) link social distance with the Samoan conception of love. Loving parents do not *tuufua* - let go/leave alone their children to do as they please. Rather parents direct, admonish and regulate their lives (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1981; Mageo 1991; Vaipae 1999; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Edwards et al. found that in migrant Pacific families, parental control extended into determining “who their peers will be, their spiritual values, their cultural values, their money, their leisure” (2004: 24). In interviews some participants stated that parents had the right to direct and regulate their children until they married. Others believed that young adults should have a voice in important life choices like careers. However, it is not uncommon for parents to dictate subject choices, work options, university courses or monetary and other contributions to family *faalavelave* - traditional/important events.

Adult and child disinclination for verbal interaction is better understood in the context of informal family interactions. Ochs (1982) makes the distinction between dyadic and triadic interactions. In Western middle-class white households, adult-child interactions are usually dyadic. When a child expresses a need the adult responds directly to the child.

In the extended Samoan household, communication between adults and young children is frequently triadic. When a young child expresses a need, the adult does not respond directly to the child. Rather he or she directs an older sibling, child or adolescent to meet the child’s need. Thus the younger child learns not to expect adult engagement.
By communicating to the third party, the adult also transforms a potentially ‘serving the child relationship’ (i.e. by meeting the child’s expressed need) into a relationship where the adult’s superior status is maintained. The adult asserts his position of authority by directing an older sibling, child or adolescent to meet the needs of the young child. The adult also maintains behaviours consistent with high status persons (i.e. minimal movement and minimal engagement with low status persons).

In Samoan society, certain behaviours are associated with high and low status persons. Platt (1986) and Ochs (1988) observed that high status people engage in minimal movement and take on jobs that require less physical energy. Reduced and slower movement is befitting of their *mamalu* - dignified status, relative to lower status household members. Hence in one household a senior government worker would arrive home by taxi. His arrival would be announced by the car horn. The horn blast signalled to the youngest child to run 50 metres down the drive to carry his work satchel up a steep hill to the family home. This enabled the adult to walk unencumbered. Once inside, the adult found a chair while the child hurried to get him a glass of water and sometimes food. Sometimes the child’s efforts were rewarded by a small treat. Apparent in the interaction was not only the contrast of minimal movement/energy expended versus much movement/energy expended but also the child’s eagerness to please the adult.

Likewise, in our neighbourhood older women generally sat during the day near the front of the house weaving, chatting and sometimes holding and/or watching a baby or small child. By contrast adolescent and young adult family members worked and socialised at the back of the house or property. There they split wood, husked coconuts, prepared food, tended the fire, washed clothes, did the dishes and talked. Young children ran to the shop, picked up rubbish, watched smaller siblings and played. Consistent with Platt’s (1986) and Ochs’s (1988) observation, higher status persons showed little engagement and interest in the activities of children, intervening only when something was deemed serious or to call out an instruction. Otherwise relating to children was largely left to lower ranking caregivers (i.e. older siblings, young adult household members or paid household help).

In more traditional households children are socialised to not assume adult time and attention. Instead children are socialised to place the well-being of the wider family group over and above themselves and be aware of others. Duranti and Ochs (1986) and Ochs (1988) suggest
that language acquisition processes encourage a sociocentric orientation. They note that Western middle class adults "indulge the egocentric tendencies of children" (Ochs 1988: 24) by attending to infants' efforts to speak, assuming intended meaning, attempting to decode infant speech and by modelling back what they think a child wants to say. By contrast they found that Samoan parents generally did not attempt to unravel a small child's speech. Instead the child was expected to accommodate the adult. Adults expected the small child to repeat their unintelligible efforts at speech and if necessary used "teasing and shaming to get a clearer utterance from a child" (Ochs 1988: 134). Ochs (1982) also noted that Samoan parents generally did not expand children's language. Instead, they were more likely to elicit from the child an imitation of adult speech. Whereas expansions (i.e. the pattern more commonly found in Western societies) involve adults orientating around a child's interests and speech, elicited imitation (i.e. the pattern more commonly found in Samoa) involves the child orientating around the adult.

Implications for teacher-student relationships, teaching and learning

There are strong continuities between socialisation patterns at home and student-teacher relationships in primary classrooms. Continuities are strengthened by the perception that teachers are like parents and parents are like teachers. The authority of the teacher is further facilitated by a cultural pattern of diffused or generalised parenting (i.e. parenting is not restricted to biological parents) (Mageo 1988; Gerber 1985; Ochs 1988; Finau 1993) and the expectation that children will defer and obey all adults. Like parents, teachers place a strong emphasis on appropriate behaviour. Both visualise the child as essentially wayward, and in need of constant direction, guidance, advice and discipline. Home and school socialisation patterns complement and reinforce each other. Both work to a) instil and affirm a deep awareness of hierarchical relationships and their associated boundaries. Both b) downplay the child as an individual and c) encourage a sociocentric, communal orientation with strong intra-group relations. These ideas are discussed in more detail.
Home and school socialisation instils and affirms a deep awareness of hierarchical relationships and their associated boundaries

In interviews teachers and parents believed that loving parents and caring teachers taitai - guide, faatoni - instruct, direct, faasao - correct, and if necessary sasa/fue - physically punish children. To overly praise, indulge, pay too much attention, le faasao - not correct, and le faatoni - not instruct/direct are seen as poor parenting and poor teaching, creating a child who does not know how to behave appropriately towards others and ultimately brings shame on themselves and their family. Both parents and, to a lesser degree, teachers use shaming, threats and occasional physical punishment as tools to get children to comply with their wishes and to assert and reaffirm status boundaries. Mageo argues that these strategies create social distance between children and adults and sensitise children to hierarchical relations within the wider society (1998).

Child-adult relationships at home and school are typified by distance. Parents and teachers believe that children should understand va fealoai - relationships of respect towards other people. Central to the concept of va is the idea of space and distance. Children are socialised to ‘iloa lou tulaga’ - know your [their] place and act accordingly. They are also reminded to ‘teu le va’ - tidy the space/relationship (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). For children, part of ‘knowing their place’ and ‘tidying the space’ is expressed in the dictate, “Aua le faalavelave i tagata matutua” (Don’t bother older people - UT3). In the classroom this translates into students being unwilling to initiate interactions with teachers, approach teachers with their needs and concerns, ask questions, put forward their ideas and a lack of informal dialogue between students and teachers. Students do not assume adults as conversation partners (Ochs 1982; Nichol 1985; Vaipae 1999). Furthermore children do not assume adult time and interest (Sutter 1980; Ochs 1982; Vaipae 1999).

Unwillingness to assume adult time and interest also indicates sensitivity to bounded relations. Shore describes the child-parent relationship as ranked and complementary. In such relationships, “the lines of authority are clearly delineated, boundaries are explicit, control is unambiguously externalised, and power relations are structurally stable” (Shore 1982: 214).

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140 These ideas are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
141 Kruse Vaai (1998) defines va as space, relationship and/or conflict. Allardice defines va as “be divided, separated, estranged - on bad terms, distance between ... relationship” (Allardice 1985: 100).
Ranked complementary relations are typified by *usitai* - obedience, *fefe* - fear, and *faaaloalo* - respect towards authority figures (ibid.). Again there are strong parallels with Bernstein’s visible pedagogy (Bernstein 1975; Bernstein 1996). Visible pedagogies are typified by strongly classified, strongly framed and hierarchically explicit relations, which translate into clear social and physical boundaries that set students and teachers apart. Student-teacher relations in fieldwork schools were typified by social and physical apartness. Students seldom disturbed adult spaces (e.g. the staffroom, the teacher’s desk, etc.) or interrupted adult conversation. Teachers engaged in ‘adult’ activities and students compensated by forming strong peer and/or *tei* - sibling/cousin relationships.

Ochs (1988) found that at home children preferred to internally resolve problems (e.g. within their peer or sibling group) rather than draw the attention of an adult. Likewise, in the classroom students preferred to discretely borrow, cajole, and assist each other rather than approach the teacher. Adult intervention was sought only as a last resort and often led to sanctions or punishments. An urban student who had spent time overseas noted that in New Zealand, “*A fusu tamaiti i le aoga, e solve lava e le faiaoga le problem sa tupu. O le mafuaga sa fusu ai le tamaitiiti ma le isi tamaitiiti.*” (If students fight in school, the teacher sorts out/solves what happened. The reason the student is fighting with the other student - Ust1.) He then added that in Samoa the teacher merely hits the children involved even if the students have already resolved the conflict.

Sutter (1980) also noted, “It is unusual for a child to come to an adult seeking approval or expression of interest in his activity” (1980: 40). Interestingly in fieldwork schools teachers’ apparent disinterest in students and their work was seldom questioned. Teachers’ disinterest was consistent with students’ expectations about how adults should behave. It was also consistent with Ochs’ (1988) observation that high status individuals show minimal engagement and interest in low status people (e.g. children) and their activities. Ochs (ibid.) also noted that high status people displayed minimal movement. Reduced movement and minimal engagement were consistent with classroom observations. After formal instruction at the board teachers generally sat at their desk and sometimes stood at the doorway or veranda. From these positions they displayed minimal engagement with students (i.e. culturally appropriate behaviours for high status persons). When and if they circulated interaction was minimal and generally related to behaviour rather than learning. Thus boundaries were maintained and reinforced.
Many Samoan children are unfamiliar with intense one-to-one dyadic, child-adult exchanges. As discussed earlier, child-adult interactions between small children and their parents/caregivers tend to be triadic in structure (e.g. a child expresses a need to an adult. The adult does not respond directly to the child but instructs a third party [usually a mid-status person like an older sibling] to meet the needs of the small child). Triadic relationships maintain and affirm hierarchical relationships and the boundaries between them. By contrast, a dyadic interaction between a child and an adult in Samoa potentially crosscuts the boundaries between hierarchically distinct groups (i.e. child/adult, students/teachers). Significantly, children and adults are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with extended dyadic exchange (Odden and Rochat 2004), do not see each other as conversation partners, and children do not assume adult interest in their work or concerns. Instead children learn to seek out alternative relationships to meet their needs. In the classroom this translated into strong peer relations. Students approached classmates for assistance with their work, to borrow items, to share goods and to interact. Some teachers recognised the value of peer relations as a pedagogical tool and actively fostered peer interaction.

*Home and school socialisation downplays the child as an individual*

Underlying home and school socialisation are core cultural values and beliefs about what it means to be a person. Western societies focus on the importance of the individual, self-determination, self-realisation, personal rights, autonomy and independence (Ewalt and Makuau 1995). In the school context these values and beliefs translate into pedagogies, which promote student-centred learning, individual rights, student autonomy and empowerment (Woodrow 2001). In Samoa socialisation processes encourage the maintenance of good relationships, promote a communal orientation and downplay the child as an individual.

In Samoa children are socialised to put aside self interest and not assert their thoughts, wishes, likes and dislikes to higher status individuals (Sutter 1980; Shore 1982; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1998; Tuia 1999; Singh and Sinclair 2001). It is also not appropriate for low status individuals to challenge hierarchically superior persons. Those in positions of authority make decisions and others follow (Huffer and So’o 2001; Singh, Dooley et al. 2001). Strong external control discourages the development of internal/individualised control, autonomy, independence and self-actualisation. In fieldwork
schools teachers largely controlled and directed what students did and how they did it. Students seldom questioned or challenged teacher instructions. To do so was perceived as disrespectful (Singh 2001). One morning I watched Year 6 students compliantly redo an activity from the previous day. No student challenged the teacher or outwardly displayed resistance. Thus like home, the school environment encouraged children to put aside unacceptable feelings and thoughts and take on a “mask of peaceful submission” (Gerber 1985: 155).

Patterns in parent and teacher communication with children often downplayed the child as an individual. Adult-child communication often took the form of directives. At school, directives were usually issued to the class as a whole. Mageo (1991) argues that group directives to children discourage the development of individual identities, foster group identification and intensify the gap between adult-child worlds. Diminished identities in turn are less likely to place demands on teachers. These patterns and effects were evident within fieldwork schools. Teachers used a range of strategies that downplayed the child as an individual. Again many overlapped with home socialisation. Teachers taught and related to the class as a collective group, and made little or no allowance for individual differences. Teachers seldom engaged with students as individuals (i.e. one-to-one), neither did they feel a need to use appeasements or justifications. Praise, when used, tended to be general in content and direction.

When an instruction was issued, children were expected to comply. Two students who had spent time in New Zealand schools noted how palagi - European teachers indulged children’s feelings. One described how her primary teacher appealed to the noisy class:

_E ese (not audible) le faiaoga i o. E faifai lemu, ‘Will you do your work quietly. ’_Ae _i nei. E ee. (Laughs) ... Ae i Niu Sila e faifai malie le tamaititi. Sei malie ai le loto o le tamaititi. Ae o le Samoa (faiaoga Samoa), e tau le faamalie. Nao o le fasi a. E _tuli e fai le galuega._ (The overseas teacher (not audible) is different. [They] gently/quietly say ‘Will you do your work please.’ But here. [The teacher] shouts. [Laughs] But in New Zealand [the teacher] approaches carefully/gently. Until the child is willing [literal - until the child’s _loto_ - will is satisfied/willing]. But the Samoan [i.e. the teacher] doesn’t indulge. They just hit. Chase [the children] to do the work. - Rst 1.)

Both students concluded that New Zealand teachers were foolish to indulge students’ feelings and idiosyncrasies. Both felt that the indulged child would ultimately become demanding and have little regard for other people and their needs.
Home and school socialisation encourages a sociocentric, communal orientation with strong group relations

In the process of relating to children collectively, adults encourage group identification and conformity (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996). Adult distancing and strong hierarchical relationships discourage intense one-to-one interactions and also work towards the development of collective identities. This was evidenced in strong and supportive peer relations in the classroom. At times collective identities and bounded hierarchical relations appeared to work against innovation and change in interaction patterns. Both groups (students and teachers) tended to ascribe to the other ‘fixed’ collective identities and behave accordingly.

Home and school socialisation patterns discourage intense personal relationships and downplay the individual subject (Mageo 1991). Instead socialisation patterns encourage a communal or sociocentric orientation (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1991; Moli 1993). Fairbairn-Dunlop (ibid.) describes this as a relational identity rather than an individual identity. Later she develops this idea and suggests that the focus on relationships is intentional “because it is the relationship which is essential to the functioning of society” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991: 111). Consistently socialisation at home and school reinforces to children that the collective well-being of the group is of greater importance than the individuals that make it up (Sutter 1980; Tavana 1994; Ewalt and Makuau 1995; Vaipae 1999).

The emergence of the communal person and strong group identity is illustrated beautifully by thirteen-year-old Alofa in the novel Where we once belonged (Figiel 1996b). Alofa reiterates the constant we-ness of life. She struggles when her Peace Corps teacher demands a story titled ‘My Pet.’ For Alofa, “‘I’ does not exist” (ibid.: 133). This is beautifully illustrated in her poem.

‘I’ does not exist.
I am not.
Myself belongs not to me because ‘I’ does not exist.
‘I’ is always ‘we’,
a part of the ‘Aiga,
a part of the Au a teine,
a part of the Aufaipese,
a part of the Aotalavou,
as part of the Aoga a le faifeau,
a part of the Aoga Aso Sa,
a part of the Church,
a part of the nu’u,
Conclusion

Recent educational projects have attempted to promote child-centred and interactive approaches to classroom learning (Esera, 1996; Macquarie Research Ltd 1997; Lake 2001). However, project reports indicate that teachers have resisted change (Esera 1996; Lake 2001). Fieldwork observations confirm this and show that student-teacher relationships are typified by distance and disengagement. I suggest that present teacher-centred pedagogies, student-teacher interaction patterns and student-teacher behaviours and dispositions are consistent with socialisation patterns and child-adult interactions in the wider community. Indeed, child-centred, interactive pedagogies require teachers to behave in ways that are not consistent with core cultural values and understandings about the relative status of adults and children and how each should behave towards the other.

One-to-one engagement with children about their work differs in significant ways from whole-class teaching at the front of the room. At the front of the room, the teacher defines and controls the learning context and process and retains control over the direction and nature of the interaction. In so doing the teacher as high status adult asserts his/her authority over the child. In one-to-one, child-centred interactions (i.e. in Western pedagogies) the teacher centres on a child’s learning needs and thus allows the child to share control and direction of the interaction. This has several implications. Firstly, by orientating his or her actions around the child’s needs, the teacher affirms the child’s sense of self and individuality. In so doing the teacher acts in contradiction to wider social patterns that encourage communal orientation. Secondly, one-to-one interaction around a child’s need requires an inversion of appropriate adult-child relations in the Samoan culture. Odden and Rochet argue that “social norms limit the amount of prolonged active engagements between children and adults, sharply reduce the frequency of questions by children, and diminish the degree to which adults ‘follow into’ the attention of children.” Furthermore they describe intensive adult interest in children and their

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142 The poem includes a number of Samoan words. Translations are as follows: aiga – family, Au a teine – girls’ group, Aufaipese – choir, Autalaveou – male youth group, Aoga a le faifeau – pastor school, Aoga Aso Sa – Sunday School, and nu ’u – village.
activities as “demeaning and damaging to the respect and dignity associated with their overall higher rank vis-à-vis children” (Odden and Rochat 2004: 42). When a teacher focuses attention on a child the adult is re-positioned to serve/attend to the child and his/her needs. This reverses the common pattern of relations where the low status person (i.e. the child) serves and attends to the needs and interests of high status persons (Mageo 1988).

Schooling practices and processes are mediated by teachers and students in social contexts (i.e. schools). In Samoa, teaching and learning are constructed in and through the va (space-relationship) between teachers (high status) and students (low status). Teachers and students bring to this relationship expectations as to what is appropriate behaviour on their and others’ part. The way a teacher interacts with students reflects the teacher’s values, attitudes, beliefs, and understandings as to who they are, who the students are and how students and teachers should behave. Similarly, student interactions with teachers and peers reflect their values, attitudes and beliefs. Often these understandings are so embedded that they are not explicitly recognised and verbalised.

Teachers and students both reflect and create their social worlds. Their values, beliefs, attitudes, world-views, ways of being and doing are shaped by their material, social and cultural ethos. Simultaneously teachers and students have the capacity to transform the nature of their interactions, and the teaching and learning process. Changes in interaction patterns require new ways of thinking, acting and interacting on both students’ and teachers’ part. Both students and teachers have power to determine the nature and quality of their relationship and what happens in classrooms (Jones 1991; Manke 1997). However, given their higher status, the teacher has greater power to initiate, manage and sustain change. Changes within school culture also have the power to bring about changes within the wider culture. This has enormous implications. How might new ideas, ways of teaching, interacting, and learning impact on core cultural values of deference, respect, communal well-being and generosity? What might be lost and what might be gained from change?

143 In fact the description of teachers as high status and students as low status is simplistic. Teacher and student status may be ambiguous. In Apia, children from a socioeconomically advantaged family (i.e. relatively wealthy, educated, high income) increasingly find themselves in classrooms with teachers who from their parents’ perspective are relatively uneducated, unworldly and unenlightened. In such instances children may not perceive the teacher as higher status. Indeed, this may partially explain the ‘disrespectful’ behaviour of an increasing number of Apia-based students. Increasingly, families in this category remove their children from government schools and place them at considerable personal expense in private schools.
Chapter Five: Contested Discourse -
Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child

Countdown Supermarket, Dunedin

I move aside to let a woman and two small children through the supermarket entrance. Retrospectively, I wish I hadn't been so polite. Immediately one of the children begins to whine. Soon her voice is joined by her sibling's. Both children clamour for different items, particular brands, fizzy drink, and sweets. The mother responds with a tirade of how she loathes taking them shopping. Finally she tells them how much she hates them. The exchange continues unremittingly throughout the twenty-minute 'journey' down supermarket aisles and finally - relief - to the checkout. The children and mother exit, miserable with their lot in life.

I am struck by the contradictions within our society. Recently there has been intense media focus on Pacific Island 'abuse' of children. But what constitutes abuse? In New Zealand anti-smacking campaigners claim all physical punishment is unacceptable and demand legislation outlawing it. But is a short, sharp smack that clarifies boundaries/acceptable behaviour/not acceptable behaviour, abuse? Today, I'm left feeling that this miserable, unresolved supermarket exchange was far more destructive than straight forward - faaSamoa parenting.

Introduction

Over the last two decades there has been increasing debate over the use of physical punishment in schools in Samoa. The debate has spilled over into the wider community. Newspaper articles, letters to the editor, television programmes, conferences, and workshops have raised public awareness of physical discipline and provided a forum for the different perspectives. The first section of this chapter, a) Physical punishment within schools and the wider society, draws on previous educational and ethnographic research and fieldwork material to show that physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment is part and parcel of growing up in Samoa for most children.
In section b) Contested discourses, I look at MESC’s ban of physical punishment in schools and its implications. I also use several case studies to show how some parents are challenging teachers’ right to hit their children. Section c) Negative impacts of physical punishment, explores the perspectives of those who oppose corporal punishment. However, this group is a minority voice. Most students, parents and teachers see the ban as problematic and believe that physical punishment is a necessary part of teaching and raising ‘good’ children. These ideas are explored in Section d) Why teachers use corporal punishment.

Section e) Understanding physical punishment, attempts to unravel why many adults believe there is a place for physical punishment of children. This section draws heavily on interview material in an effort to construct a Samoan perspective. I begin by looking at commonly held f) Beliefs about physical punishment. Underlying these beliefs are certain understandings about children and their relationship with adults. These are explored in section g) The nature of children, and h) Moral agendas: The role of the teacher. Section i) Exploring Links: Physical punishment and hierarchical relationships, looks at the wider social context in which beliefs about disciplining children are set.

**Physical punishment within schools and the wider society**

Physical punishment in any form is explicitly banned by MESC. Despite the ban, physical punishment occurred to varying degrees in each fieldwork school. Three to four times a week I observed instances where children were lightly smacked or hit for playing, talking, and being slow to move or begin a task, or I heard the sound of a child being punished in an adjacent classroom. However, for the most part physical discipline occurred in the context of caring student-teacher relationships. Far more powerful was the explicit and implicit threat of punishment. Many teachers carried a metre ruler. Some used the ruler to tap off-task students, hurry them along, and to bang the blackboard or table to get attention. Sometimes teachers made verbal statements like ‘toetiti oe’ - you’re nearly going to get it implying imminent punishment. On several occasions I watched teachers severely scold senior students. Each time, the student hung back from the teacher. When repeatedly told to step forward, the

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144 Classrooms were often divided by thin layers of hardboard. This meant that whilst you were sitting in one classroom, you could hear what was going on in the adjacent room.
students cowered, bowed their head, and approached with caution. In each case, I felt that my presence as researcher stopped the teacher hitting the child. Whilst visiting town schools, there were two instances where hitting or slapping a student led to parents lodging complaints with the police.

Students noted differences between teachers. One urban student (Ust5) contrasted his present teacher's cautious use of physical punishment with the previous teacher who hit them for no apparent reason. "Ua oo i le mea e le tatau ona sasa ai. Ua ova sasa isu tamaiti." (Even things that [we] shouldn't be hit for. Hitting too frequently/too hard some children.) Parents and teachers also differentiated between ok and not ok punishment at school. Almost all expressed the opinion that a light tap quickly and effectively got a child on task. Several referred to a gentle ear-twist or an ini - pinch as sufficient. Some contrasted this with the heavy punishment they had experienced at school.

Sua! (emphasis). E manatua na aso. Faaaga e le faiaoga le laau. (Pause). Ta punonou. Aso uma lava. ... Oka - a really good teacher and a really hard man as well. Oka. E te fefu ia i le tamaloa. (Cruel/hard! [emphasis]. [I] remember those days. The teacher used a stick. While you bent over. Everyday. ... Oka [expression of emphasis] - a really good teacher and a really hard man as well. Oka. You were so afraid of the man - UT3.)

Tone-Schuster (2001) surveyed 40 tertiary students in Samoa. Almost all had experienced or observed instances of being hit with an object, pinched, smacked, slapped or strapped by a teacher. In some cases physical punishment was accompanied by verbal abuse and/or swearing. Sioa recalls as a teacher listening to students "being sworn at, berated and occasionally slapped" (Sioa 1997: 89). In her interviews with rural parents, Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a) found that three-quarters believed that the strap was necessary at school. Parents were uncomfortable about disruptive behaviour and saw physical discipline as preferable to disorder.

Young Samoan migrants to New Zealand also recounted instances of harsh physical punishment in school in Samoa and a heavy emphasis on appropriate behaviour (Taleni 1998; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). By contrast they noted that New Zealand students were often disrespectful and teachers failed to assert their authority. Tanielu (1997; 2002b) found similarities between fai'feau - pastor school and aoga tulaga lua - primary school. In both contexts behaviour was controlled "with the stroke of the stick or a broom" (ibid.: 45) and "fear of a hiding if they made mistakes" (Tanielu 1997: 47).
Physical discipline is not restricted to school settings. Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a) refers to its frequent use in the extended family and links it to violence in the wider society. In a survey of 16 rural women she found that only 1 did not hit, 7 hit three to four times a week and others every day. Fairbairn-Dunlop also noted variations in frequency, intensity and who dealt out punishment. Grandparents, parents and older siblings all engaged in hitting. Participants believed that fathers dealt out heavier punishment. Conversely survey results showed that younger mothers physically disciplined their children more frequently. Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001b) suggests that this might reflect their disempowered and socially and economically stressful location within the extended family. This is consistent with Freeman's (1984) and Mageo's (1988) observations that it is culturally unacceptable to direct frustration and anger to people of higher status. Instead, anger and stress are redirected downwards to persons of lower status (e.g. children).

Ochs (1988) observed that the higher the status of the person administering punishment the more severe it was. She also noted that children preferred to resolve issues internally rather than draw adult attention. In some instances older siblings pre-empted adult punishment by ‘punishing’ younger siblings. In extended family interactions I observed older siblings, caregivers and sometimes a mother pre-empting and bluffing punishment in order to appease the father or a higher status person thus saving the child from a harsher outcome. Conversely, older family members sometimes intervened on a child’s behalf when they believed discipline was too severe. In many instances offending youngsters sought out a grandparent to escape a parent’s wrath. In the school context, students preferred to resolve conflicts internally. They seldom approached teachers with complaints about peers. When and if this occurred it was invariably significant (i.e. a fight between older students) and led to strong adult response.

Contested discourse

Samoan culture is explicit about what constitutes acceptable behaviour. When children disobey or show disrespect they are speedily reprimanded and sometimes physically disciplined. For many children physical punishment or the threat of punishment is a normal
part of growing up (Freeman 1984; Mageo 1991; Holmes and Holmes 1992; Va’a 1995). With increasing opportunities to travel, study, work, live overseas, and the simultaneous flow of ideas and people of different cultural backgrounds into Samoa, Samoans are increasingly exposed to contemporary Western notions about good parenting, children’s rights and the negative impact of physical punishment. However, these changes are uneven and contested.

At one end of the continuum is a cross-section of individuals who are strongly influenced by Western notions of parenting. This voice is represented by Fairbairn-Dunlop who refers to “compelling research findings [which] document the emotional and psychological effects of corporal punishment, including its negative influence on general educational progress and the child’s developing self-esteem, sense of security and belonging, and feelings that life is worth living” (2001a: 203). This cross-section of Samoan parents is often well travelled, tertiary educated, and often holds influential positions. Difficulties emerge when policies reflect their interests and beliefs rather than those of the wider public. This situation is epitomised in the education sector, where MESC’s ban on all forms of physical discipline stands in contradiction to the beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and values of many students, parents and indeed many teachers.

**MESC Policy on Corporal Punishment**

Article 15 of the Department of Education (now MESC) policies states, “E le faatagaina se faiaoga na te sasaina pe na te fasia se tamaitiiti. O se isi faaupuga, o le solitulafono, se faiaoga e pai lona lima i se tamaitiiti” (It is forbidden for any teacher to hit or hurt any child. In addition, any teacher who touches (hits/hurts) any child will be breaking the law) (Department of Education 1992). All teachers were keenly aware of MESC’s position on corporal punishment. At a 2003 teacher in-service, trainers and MESC representatives repeatedly stated that any form of corporal punishment was unacceptable and teachers had to develop new ways to discipline students. In the past, parents unhappy about a teacher disciplining their child complained to the principal, Department of Education (DOE) or

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145 Gerber (1975) and Ochs (1988; Mageo 1998; Tuia 1999; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a) note that babies are never hit and small children (under two) are seldom hit. However, Freeman (1984) documents several instances where he observed children under the age of two being hit. During fourteen years residence in Samoa, I observed instances when an adult lightly smacked or hit a toddler for disobedience (generally for moving close to, or touching something that might have endangered themselves or a sibling, or for throwing a tantrum). I saw no instance of an adult smacking a baby (i.e. a child of under eight months).
police. Principals and DOE personnel endeavoured to resolve incidents internally. However, in 2004 MESC announced it would no longer deal with complaints and directed all parents to the police. For teachers this has serious implications. Once a complaint is lodged with the police, it often leads to a teacher's arrest, court case and, if charged, termination of employment, loss of income, prison sentence, public shame and loss of status.

In the following section, I share several case studies where parents lodged complaints with the police. Significantly both instances occurred in urban schools over two consecutive weeks.

**Case Study One**

One afternoon the principal explains that she has had “a sad and difficult day”. The preceding day a male teacher, with 20 years teaching experience, hit a child. The child told his parents who promptly returned to the school, sought out the teacher and demanded an explanation. The teacher attempted to justify his action, claiming that the child was talking/not listening and he had lightly tapped the child on the head. Angered by the teacher’s failure to apologise, the discussion developed into an argument. Not satisfied, the parents reported the incident to the police. Later in the afternoon the police arrived at school, arrested the teacher and held him in prison overnight.

The principal expressed disappointment that neither the parents nor teacher had approached her. Hence she did not have the opportunity to resolve the conflict and avert police intervention. Once reported, the teacher would be charged and, if found guilty, face employment termination, and a jail sentence. From her perspective an able, experienced teacher would be lost from the teaching service, and the teacher and his family would face personal humiliation and loss of income. The incident also led to bad publicity for the school. Furthermore, it created an immediate crisis. Forty-five students were without a teacher.

During the day, the principal had investigated the incident. She found that students verified the teacher’s account (i.e. light hit on the head) and that this was inconsistent with the parents’ claim that the child’s eye was injured. As the parents had not returned with the child, it was impossible to verify the student’s injury. The principal noted that the family lived in a distant

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146 Due to a teacher shortage at the primary level it was difficult to fill vacant positions. One teacher had recently migrated. With this teacher’s suspension, two classes were without a teacher.
suburb (approximately eight kilometres from the school). From her perspective, the parents
should have relocated their child to a closer school rather than disrupt the school, cause
inconvenience (i.e. by other teachers having to cover for the suspended teacher), strain
relations, and ruin a competent teacher's career at her school.

Over the next few days teachers talked about the incident. All expressed anger at the parents' action. Some felt that the principal could have been more assertive with the police and provided more support for the teacher. Several days later a local radio station talked about the incident and named the school. The announcer stated that child's eye and mouth were injured and bloody. One teacher rang the station and complained that the report was incorrect. She expressed anger that the school was made to look bad. Her fury was intensified by the knowledge that both parents were teachers and therefore should support other teachers rather than faamataga the school – make the school look bad. "Who," she demanded, "will now look after the class?" (UT3).

Case Study Two

The principal recounts that much of her time has been spent trying to resolve a conflict between a teacher and two parents. In the preceding week, a teacher slapped a child in the face causing the child's nose to bleed. The parents went directly to the police and lodged a complaint. They then went to the principal who took them to see the teacher involved. Unsatisfied by the teacher's explanation and unwillingness to accept fault, the parents determined to press charges. The Head Teacher and Infant Mistress then visited the family's home to apologise on the teacher's behalf. The parents were still unsatisfied, believing that the teacher who hit the child should offer the apology. Finally the teacher visited the family, apologised and the parents withdrew their charge. Interestingly, the principal insisted that nothing was given to the family. From her perspective, she hoped that each parent would forgive the teacher for the right reasons, "mai lona lagona" - from his/her heart. She believed that in accepting a gift, the parents would feel forced to accept an apology.

Contested discourse - student, parent, and teacher voices

Samoan students, parents and teachers saw physical discipline as an area of contestation. For participants it was not an isolated issue. Rather ideas about physical punishment were intimately linked to ideas surrounding what constitutes faaSamoa, appropriate behaviour,
good parenting, and the implications of a changing society. Students, parents and teachers were keenly aware and often critical of palagi - white European, discipline practices and believed that these contributed to unacceptable behaviour in schools and the wider society.

I le olaga i Niu Sila, e lē mafai ona fasi se tamaititi pe malosi foi se leo i totonu o aoga. Ae, o le mea la e tupu, o le a matua oo tamaititi i se olaga sili atu ona lē malie. ... Matua malosi a le ula o tamaititi i atumau i fafo. (In New Zealand, you are not allowed to hit a child or shout at them in school. But what happens, children’s lives are ruined/not good. ... Children overseas are so cheeky/rude - RP4.)

I Niu Sila, e sā tamaiti ona fasi e le faiaoga. E molia le faiaoga i le tulafono. FaaSamoa e faatonu. E faatonu i le mea e fai. Ae Niu Sila, e leai. Aahu atu le tamaititi ma leaga se mea o lona tino, e ave i le tulafono. E fai loa le complaint. (In New Zealand, children are not allowed to be touched [literal - sacred/forbidden/taboo]. The teacher is not allowed to hit them. The teacher would be charged. In the Samoan way you instruct/order. You instruct/order what should be done. In New Zealand it’s not like that. If the child’s body is injured you get charged. A complaint is immediately laid - Rst1.)

Many Samoans living in Pacific Rim countries believe that schools do not place enough emphasis on appropriate behaviour and are too tolerant of disrespectful and disruptive students (Nichol 1985; Taleni 1998; Tuia 1999; Singh and Karen 2001). Many also resent state interference in their ‘parental right’ to physically discipline their children. Some believe that children use the law to evade parental punishment (Va’a 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996). Pacific Rim parents also feel that state intervention disempowers parents, contributes to family breakdown and increasingly disrespectful, unruly and irresponsible offspring (ibid.). Their thoughts parallel those of interviewed adults in Samoa in interesting ways. Whereas parents overseas resented state interference in their right to discipline their children, teachers in Samoa resented MESC interference in how they disciplined students. Like Pacific Rim parents, they perceived MESC policy to be disempowering. Furthermore teachers and parents believed that it contributed to a breakdown of relationships in the classroom and the wider society and an escalation of unruly behaviour.

Teachers and parents in Samoa attributed MESC’s ban of physical punishment to the flow of ideas from overseas.

E ese le taua o le sasa i aso ia. Ua eeseese a. Ona ua sau tu ma aga mai fafo. Aua, o fafo ia, e sau ai le mea lena, e aua lē toe sasa le tamaititi. O lea ua mulimu i ai Samoa. (In the olden days hitting was very important. Now it’s different. Because of overseas influences. Because overseas there is that thing, of don’t hit the child. Now Samoa is following that – RT6.)

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A rural student recounted how an auntie residing in Auckland had been charged and jailed after harshly beating a child in her care. Several adults expressed the belief that the law in New Zealand undermined the power and authority of New Zealand parents.

Urban teachers noted that parents who were well educated, had travelled, lived or studied overseas, or were of expatriate origin were more likely to complain if their children were hit. One town teacher recalled four incidences where parents arrived at school and challenged his right to discipline their children. In each case the parents were overseas educated. Similarly, in the first case study, one parent was a lawyer, and in the second, a parent taught at a prestigious private school. Both had been educated in tertiary institutions in Pacific Rim countries and were profoundly influenced by Pacific Rim ideologies and practices. Teachers in Samoa recognised a link between an overseas tertiary education and changed attitudes and practices.

Several urban teachers expressed ambivalence about teaching students with well-educated and well travelled parents. Teachers noted that this cross-section of parents did not respect teachers and accept their authority as in the past. Indeed, these parents increasingly challenged teachers’ actions. One male teacher suggested that ex-scholarship parents reported teachers to the police because they wanted to show that they were ‘well-educated’ and knew the law. Beneath these explanations are subtle power issues. The educated parent asserts his/her status over the less educated primary teacher by challenging his/her authority to hit their child. The educated parent perceives his/her child as an extension of themselves and rejects the right of the teacher to discipline (i.e. assert his/her authority) over their child.

Implied in the teacher’s indignation is an awareness that his/her status has been undermined and the order of things turned upside down. This idea is hinted at by a rural student.
A sasa atu le faiaoga, pe taina le lima o se ta'amaititi, alu le ta'amaititi ta'u i matua. Faapea matua, o le aia tatau a ta'amaiti. Ave le faiaoga i Apia, ... i le Ofisa Aoga. Ave i le falepupufo. Faasala. Tea e se mai le gahuega. ... Pei ua faasala e ta'amaiti tagata matua. (If the teacher smacks or hits the hand of a child, the child tells the parent. The parents think about the children’s rights. They report [literal - take] the teacher to the Department of Education in Apia. [The teacher] is taken to prison. Fined. Loses his job. ... It’s as if children are punishing older people - Rst2.)

In Samoan culture, anger, dissatisfaction, and punishment are directed downward (i.e. from people of higher status to people of lower status). Thus it is appropriate and acceptable for a teacher to punish a child but not appropriate for a child to complain about the teacher’s action, be supported in their complaint, and indirectly contribute to the teacher’s punishment. In a similar vein, a MESC staff member (Edex4) commented that when a teacher in the past smacked a child, the parents would in turn smack the child (i.e. affirm the teacher’s authority and right to discipline the child). Parents would never question a teacher’s authority. Now he notes, “It’s all topsy-turvy i aso nei. Pei ua centre le ta'amaititi.” (It’s all topsy-turvy nowadays. It’s as though the child is the centre.) He elaborates that in the past children taautua – served adults, but today it seems to be reversed. Instead, adults seem to serve children. Recontextualising this to the classroom, it could be argued that in the past children approached their relationships with adults with caution, took care to read contexts carefully and displayed deference and respect. Now the adult (in this case the teacher) is increasingly under pressure to approach the child with caution, read contexts carefully (e.g. Whose child? Who’s observing? What might the consequences be?), and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

Closely linked to the discussion of an adult’s right to physically discipline a child is the equally contested issue of children’s rights. Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a) goes so far as to suggest that there is a conflict between physical abuse and the fact that Samoa is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. In the minds of many students, parents and teachers the issue of corporal punishment was closely linked to children’s rights. In an earlier excerpt, a student (Rst2) criticised parents who challenged teachers’ rights to physically discipline students and blamed children’s rights. He

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147 All adult participants and some students were aware of the current debate on children’s rights in Samoa and held a variety of positions. Most parents and teachers believed that children should have a right to express their thoughts and feelings but rejected the idea that children could choose to do as they wish, assert their authority over adults and/or show disrespect towards adults. During visits to Samoa, there were several television programmes and two conferences (September 2002 and June 2004) that focused on children’s rights.
concluded “E le tatau ona i ai se aia tatau a tamaiti.” (Children should not have any rights.)

Others expressed similar views.

> Ou te matua tetee ai (le aia tatau). Ona o le mafuaga (pause), o mea o le agamu o Samoa. A faalogo le tamaititi i le sasa ma le ia, e poto ai. E poto le tamaititi. (I absolutely reject it [children’s rights]. For this reason [pause], Samoan custom. If a child feels the rod/stick/hit and the blow/strike, they will become clever/wise. The child will be clever/wise - UT1.)

One rural student (Rst5) claimed that some children used ‘human rights’ to resist adult efforts to discipline them. She then suggested that children’s rights, like the ban on hitting children, represents an inversion of the way relationships ought to be.

> Ae, sei mafau o poa aia na fanau mai ai? O le manava o lana tina na sau ai. Ae ua sau la ia, ma le faaloalo i lona tina. O lea ua fai lana faiga. Pei ua tina atu lona tina i ana ia. Ae le tina ia i lona tina. (But, think about where she came from [literal - who gave birth to her]. She comes from her mother’s stomach. But, here she is, not showing respect to her mother. She is doing whatever she likes [implied - acting irresponsibly]. It’s like she’s the mother [implied - in charge] of her mother. But she is not her mother [literal translation - she is not mother to her mother] - Rst5.)

The same idea is expressed by a rural parent.

> E le tatau ona i ai (le aia tatau o tamaiti). Aua, a faapea, a tuu i ai le avanoa e i ai se aia tatau o fanau, o lona uiga e i ai le taimi, e le pule matua i fanau. Ae pule fanau i matua. Fanau, e faatomutou i mea lelei. Ae o matua e tatau ona tele le aia tatau. (There shouldn’t be [children’s rights]. Because if you let children have rights, a time will come when children will boss/control their parents. Instead of parents being in charge of children. Children should be instructed/guided as to what is right. Parents should have strong rights - RP1.)

Teachers and parents were very conscious about changing attitudes and practices. An urban-based teacher educator observed that Samoans had shifted from universal acceptance of corporal punishment, to debating the pros and cons, to the possibility that it was no longer acceptable. Even students were keenly aware that discipline was an area of contestation. A town student recalled a discussion between a Year 6 teacher and her Year 7 teacher. The Year 6 teacher criticised her teacher saying:

> 'E leaga ia.' O le faaoga a matou (pause), e le sasa. Ae fai atu le tala a le matou faaoga, 'O le mea lena (i.e. o le sasa) ua atili ai le le iloa e le tamaititi. Ua sese (pause), o le aoaoga o le fai ma sasa.' ('She’s bad.' Our (pause), teacher, she doesn’t hit. But our teacher said, ‘That’s [i.e. hitting] what makes the child even more stupid. It’s wrong to teach by hitting.’ - Ust6.)
Not only did different groups within contemporary Samoa hold different positions on the use of physical punishment, but there were also significant differences within groups (i.e. some teachers strongly supported hitting and some did not). Furthermore, interview material showed that individuals often held multiple and sometimes contradictory positions. This was particularly evident with urban parents and teachers. One urban parent (UP4), believed that the ban was good in that it encouraged teachers to think more deeply about hitting and faifai malie - be more cautious/gentle when hitting. She then justified teachers’ hitting stating categorically that no teacher hits without reason. Teachers hit because children are “faalolaga” (disobedient) and “faavalevalea” (silly). Another town parent (UP1) supported the ban because she believed that some children did not want to come to school because they were afraid of being hit and because hitting impacted on their ability to learn. However, she later stated, “A le fasia e le faiaoga e atili ai le ulavale o le tamaititi ma le lē faaloga. E ala ona faapea, ‘Ou te ulavale aua ua faasa ona fasi matou e le faiaoga.’” (If the teacher doesn’t hit the child they will just be more naughty and disobedient. The reason this happens [is because the child thinks], ‘I can be naughty because the teacher is forbidden to hit us.’)

In interviews, parents and teachers made frequent comparisons between the past and present. Comparisons indicated shifting allegiances and values. In the past, parents often confirmed the teacher’s status, authority, and right to discipline a child by repeating the punishment at home.

*I a o le mea lena sa faia e matua i na aso. E sasa. Alu atu ta ita, sa sasa e le faiaoga, alu atu i le fale ae toe sasa foi ta ita e le tina ma le tama. Ia, ta talia lelei a. Ustai. E te po to ai. (That’s what happened to us in those days. [We] got hit. We’d go [home] after being hit by the teacher, go home and get hit again by our mother and father. We just accepted it. Obeyed. That’s how we learnt - RT6.)*

*I aso na, a sasa ta ita e le faiaoga, a toe talu i le fale e sasa foi e le tama. (In those days, if the teacher hit us, when we returned home my [literal - the) father hit us again - UT1.)*

Parents and teachers also contrasted complaining parents, “O tina na, e le taofoio. E sau e faamisa i le faiaoga” (Mothers who do not have self control. They come and cause an argument with the teacher) with parents who ‘understood’ and supported the teacher.

*O matua na, o matua malamalama. Faapea o latou foi sa aumai foi i le tulaga na aoga ai latou. O matua lena, e avatu latou fanau i le aoga - fasi e le faiaoga, ae le tio mai. E lē faito mai. O matua malamalama na. La e iloa le mea e tatau ona fasi ai. ... E ala ona sasa le tamaititi, e aao ai. E iloa le sese la e fai.*
(Those parents are parents who are wise/understanding. They remember that that is how they learnt. Those parents send their children to school - if the teacher hits them, they don’t complain. They don’t complain. That kind of parent understands. They know the reason [the teacher] hits [the child]. ... The teacher hits so that the child will learn. So that they will know what they did wrong - UT2.)

Teachers noted a contradiction in parental behaviour. Several asked what right parents had to complain about teachers hitting their children when they disciplined their children much more harshly at home. In many cases parents explicitly urged classroom teachers to *fue* – hit their children. Teachers expressed feeling torn between MESC policy, their own beliefs, and parental wishes. Some urban teachers believed that children exploited the ban. Students knew that teachers were not allowed to hit them and some knew that their parents supported the ban. Town teachers knew that children knew the ‘rules’, and students in turn knew that teachers knew that they knew the rules. Hence teachers felt constrained and disempowered. Several urban teachers lamented that no one supported them in their work and that the ban meant that many good teachers would leave the profession, thus creating an even more serious teacher shortage.

Rural parents, teachers and, to a lesser degree, urban participants strongly believed that MESC’s ban on corporal punishment would lead to a deterioration in the way young people behave.

*The thing about the new rule, it’s making teenagers and children behave/think/act inappropriately. Because they are emphasising not to hit. They’re pushing it here too [in rural schools]. The [MESC] office and PSA too. There are heavy penalties - RT5.*

The teacher refers to some teachers being imprisoned but adds that they themselves learnt through being smacked. She concludes, “*Aua, a le sasa, ta te le iloa le mea e oo i ai*” (Because, if you don’t hit it’ll be impossible to know what the consequences will be [implying - children’s inappropriate behaviour will escalate]). From the perspective of most parents and teachers, schooling was not just about learning how to read, write, and acquire knowledge. Schooling was primarily about learning how to behave appropriately.
Negative impact of corporal punishment

All participants recognised that physical discipline could negatively impact on student learning. Over half talked about punishment causing fear and anxiety and claimed that this hindered a child's ability to think straight, concentrate and affected their ability to learn. Several suggested that a child's mind became fefiloi - mixed up when hit.

*Aua o le tulaga na ua lusi ai le mafaufau, o le sasa. E le tatau ia te au le sasa. Ua fefiloi. Ua affect lona mafaufau. Ua fefe.* (That's the reason that (some children) don’t think straight [literal - lose their mind/thought]. From my perspective hitting shouldn’t be allowed. [The mind] becomes muddled/mixed up. It affects the mind. [They] are afraid - UT5.)

*Ua le mafai ona fai se mea e le tamaititi sa sasa aua e atili ai le sese o lona mafaufau. Ua leaga. Ua atili le le lelei o lana galuega la e fai. A fasi, e alu lona mafaufau i le tiga. Ua le lelei se mea.* (The child who was hit is unable to do anything [implied - school work] because their thoughts are even more incorrect. It's bad. Their work will be even poorer. If they are hit, their thoughts focus on the pain/the hurt. Nothing is gained/good -Ust4.)

Teachers and parents believed that weak children were more affected by physical punishment and the threat of physical punishment. Some suggested that this meant that these students were less likely to contribute, ask questions and more likely to get turned off school. Significantly, teachers and parents often described weak children as *ulavale* - mischievous, *le usitai/faalogo* - disobedient, *le faalogo* - not listening/inattentive (i.e. displaying behaviours that led to teachers punishing them). The tendency to link poor results to bad behaviour meant that students were seen as responsible for poor outcomes. From this perspective, teachers' impatience and anger towards such students are justified and teachers are seen to act in students' interests when they hit them.

Teachers also linked weak students with *aiga vaivai* - poor/weak families or *mativa* - poor families. This too had interesting implications. Town teachers were keenly aware that certain parents (i.e. high status, well travelled, educated) were more likely to challenge their right to hit their offspring. By contrast parents who perceived themselves as *aiga vaivai* - low status/poor, *mativa* - poor, or *le aoga* – uneducated were less likely to challenge teachers who disciplined their child. Hence *vaivai* - academically weak students and/or students from *aiga vaivai* - weak/socially disempowered/poor families were more likely to be physically punished than the *poto* – clever child or child from an *aiga lelei* – good family.
Fairbairn-Dunlop in her discussions with caregivers found that few expressed concern that hitting might cause physical, psychological or emotional damage to children or academically hinder their progress at school. Instead she found that caregivers were concerned about what other people might think if they visibly injured their children. Adults also expressed hesitancy about interfering when other adults punished their own children lest their action damaged their relationship with the other adult. In interviews in this study, only one adult stated that hitting might make some children feel bad about themselves and unloved. This parent talked about hugging his children and telling them how much he loved them when “forced” to punish them. Adults’ primary concern was not the negative consequences of hitting. Rather adults were concerned about the negative consequences of not hitting. Participants believed that indulgence and softness (i.e. not hitting) spoiled a child and created a person who behaved in ways that caused others to dislike him/her. Parents who did not use physical discipline irreparably damaged children by allowing socially unacceptable behaviours to escalate and thus created children that brought shame on themselves and their families. However, adults had very clear ideas about what kind of physical punishment was acceptable.148

Adult participants frequently stated “Aua le soona fasi” (Don’t hit too frequently/too hard). They also argued that one should “Fasi i le mea tatau” (Hit for the right kinds of reasons). Furthermore, students, parents and teachers were very clear about what was ‘ok’ versus ‘not ok’ hitting. Hitting the head hard was unacceptable, whereas a light tap/hit on the arms, legs or body got the child on task and clarified the boundaries of acceptable and not acceptable behaviour.

E lelei le sasa e le faioaga, ae o le sasa i le mea aogä. I le sese o le tamaititi. Ae le o le ituaiga sasa (pause). Nao le taina o le lima, e aua le faia. Ae, e le lelei le sasa ia matua tigaina. (It’s good for teachers to hit, but they should hit for the right things/when it will make a difference. When a child does something wrong. But not the kind of hitting [pause]. Just a hit on the hand to not do it again. But it’s not good to hit a child and injure them - UP3.)

Rural and urban parents and teachers believed that complaints were justified if a child was badly injured by a teacher. Students and parents believed that punishment should be balanced

148 During the years that I lived in Samoa there were several instances where neighbouring parents severely beat a child (i.e. to a point where the child was in danger of having a limb broken, bleeding or being severely
against what a child had done. From this perspective “E aoga le fue ae faatatau i le ulavale o le tamaitititi.” (It’s useful to hit but it should be appropriate to the child’s [degree of] mischievousness/naughtiness - Ust4.) Whereas MESC’s ban included all forms of punishment, parents and teachers differentiated between sasa e tatau - hitting that’s okay and sasa e le tatau - hitting that’s not okay. However, difficulty arose in defining “O fea e gata ai le tatau?” (What defines [literal - is the end of] appropriate/okay hitting? - Edex4). Reminiscent of the excerpt ‘Big Fresh Dunedin’ at the beginning of the chapter, the MESC employee asks what constitutes being hurt? Is it a hit that leaves a small mark on a child’s body or verbal abuse that deeply disturbs the child’s mind?

**Why teachers use corporal punishment**

A range of interesting ideas emerged about why teachers hit students. Some teachers and teacher educators believed that the ill prepared teacher was more likely to engage in physical discipline. Several principals and teacher trainers suggested that such problems would not arise if teachers varied their teaching style and ensured that learning was engaging and interesting. As one Head Teacher stated: “A tele ana metotia e leai se mea e tagafua e fasi.” (If the teacher has lots of methods there will be no reason for them to hit/touch [a child].) Hidden in this statement are subtle changes in thinking about the role of the teacher in relation to the student and their relative positioning. In both scenarios, responsibility is shifted to the teacher. The teacher hits because he or she is badly prepared or has dull teaching methods. Thus responsibility for the teacher’s actions is shifted from the child’s bad behaviour to the teacher and the teacher is called on to endear, entertain and better serve the child through providing a more varied and interesting learning programme.

Such thinking was not consistent with that of the majority of students, parents and teachers. Teachers hit students because students behaved in unthoughtful, disrespectful ways. Blame and responsibility were placed on students’ behaviour and teachers acted in moral, responsible ways by punishing students. These ideas are briefly introduced here and explored in greater detail later in the chapter.

bruised). In each case adults from adjacent families rushed to intervene, removed the child from the situation and a person of authority (i.e. a church leader, church minister, senior chief) counselled the irate adult.
Participants referred to teachers hitting children because the children were *ulavale* - naughty/mischievous, *le faaaloloalo* - disrespectful, *le usitai / faalagata* - disobedient, *le pulea / leaga le amio* – behaving in an undisciplined/bad way, *le faalogo* - not listening/attending in class, or fighting with peers. A small number of students and parents stated that some teachers hit when a student could not answer a question (i.e. implying that they had not listened) or asked too many questions. Tone-Schuster (2001) found that tertiary students recalled teachers punishing them for swearing, breaking school rules, incomplete work and having a bad attitude. Participants’ explanations were consistent with reasons why Pacific Rim parents disciplined their children (i.e. disobedient, disrespectful, fighting, naughty/mischievous behaviours) (Va’a 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Likewise, Fairbairn-Dunlop found that caregivers’ use of physical discipline related to “Samoan ideas of respectful and right behaviour” (2001b: 40). Teachers also saw hitting as consistent with *faa Samoa* and home practices (Tone-Schuster 2001). Furthermore some believed that if they did not hit, students would not respect them (ibid.).

**Understanding physical punishment in Samoa**
Physical punishment is an important socialisation tool in Samoa (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Freeman 1984; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Mageo 1998; Vaipae 1999; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a; Edwards, Jensen et al. 2004). Indeed, Mageo (1998) describes physical punishment as the most important negative sanction (alongside teasing and scaring). Its use in school settings is not surprising given that most interviewed students, parents and teachers believed that the primary purpose of school was to teach students how to behave appropriately. In response to the open-ended question, “What important things should children learn at school?” all rural participants focused on appropriate behaviour. Significantly, responses were more mixed in the town school. In response to the same question, half of the students named subject areas. To find out about other valued learning areas, I had to prompt or specifically say, “You have already talked about important subjects. What other things are important to learn at school?” The opposite occurred in a rural setting. In rural schools, participants often focused exclusively on behaviour. It appears that rural students are more likely to see school as being primarily about learning appropriate behaviour and town students more varied in their responses. Some talked about particular subject areas and academic achievement and some focused on behaviour. In neighbouring Tonga, Helu Thaman (1988) found that teachers were more concerned about social and moral outcomes than intellectual and academic goals.

Participants believed that good and caring teachers made sure that students showed fagaaloalo/ava - respect (especially towards those who are older), understood the va fealoai - relations of respect, were usitai - obedient and faalogo - attentive.

_Ae sili ana iloa le va fealoai. E iloa le tamaititi le nofo i lalo, o le a le tala e fa'i._
_Ona iloa foi ava i soa se tagata. E le gate i matua na fanau ai, ma a'ua le faiaoaga ma tagata ese mai ia te ia._ (But the most important thing is to know relations of respect. The child should know how to sit [implying to show deference by sitting], what they should say. [They] should respect all people. Not only their parents and me the teacher, but also different people - RT4.)

_Ia iloa le faaalaloalo i tagata ia e matua ia ia. Ae sili ona faaalaloalo i le faiaoaga. Ia usitai i le faiaoaga._ (To know respect for people who are older than him/her. But most important to show respect to the teacher. To be obedient to the teacher - RP5.)

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149 Socialisation processes were discussed in Chapter Four. Issues relating to physical punishment are explored in more depth here.
Beliefs about corporal punishment

Samoan parents in Samoa and Pacific Rim countries frequently use the Bible to support their use of physical punishment (Freeman 1984; Va’a 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Tanielu 1997; Singh and Karen 2001; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a). In this research, participants’ attitudes were strongly influenced by biblical teachings. On a number of occasions parents and teachers justified physical punishment by quoting from the Old Testament. Several stated, “E aoga le ta i le tua o le vale.” (Proverbs 10, Verse 13) or “O le sasa e tatau i le tua o le vale.” (Hitting is justified if the person is stupid/behaves inappropriately). Rural and urban participants reiterated that if you did not hit your children when they behaved in inappropriate ways you did them a disservice.

Aua, a læ sasa ma faatonu e læ maua se mea lelei. (Because if you don’t hit and instruct [children], nothing good will be achieved - UP4.)

A læ fue le tamaitiiti, e læ maua le poto. (If the child is not hit they will not learn/become clever/wise - UP1.)

By punishing a child, teachers and parents assist the child to know the difference between right and wrong. Thus the Samoan parent believes that they act in a moral and caring way when they hit an erring child (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996).

Aua, a læ sasa, ta te læ iolo le mea sese la e fai. (Because if [the child] is not hit they will not know what they have done wrong - RT5.)

O le talitonuga - a læ safe, e læ iolo lona sese. (There is belief - if [the child] does not suffer they will not know their mistake/wrong - UP2.)

E ala ona sasa le tamaitiiti, e aoao ai. E iolo le sese la e fai. (A child is hit in order to teach them. In order to know their mistake/wrong doing - UT6.)

150Chapter Two included a detailed discussion about the word poto. Helu Thaman (1988) notes multiple meanings of poto in Tonga and suggests that poto has taken on new meanings in the context of formal schooling.
Tanielu found that many Samoan migrants in New Zealand continued to believe that children would only learn through physical discipline. Parents expressed the belief that one must “‘Faamaini le pa’u ona uma lea o le faalogogata’ Sting the skin to stop misbehaviour” (Tanielu 1997: 47).

In informal classroom discussions and in several interviews about physical discipline in schools, teachers and parents also expressed the belief ‘O le mata’u i le Atua o le amataga lea o le poto’ (Fear of God is the beginning of cleverness/wisdom). As noted by Freeman (1984), Samoans are profoundly influenced by Old Testament teachings. God is visualised as a God of love and a God to be feared. Those who sin risk being struck down by the all-seeing, all-powerful and all-knowing God. In interviews many students also used the word fefe - fear when talking about their relationship with teachers. Many linked fear to physical punishment. One rural student stated, “E leai se isi e le fefe i faiaoga” (“There isn’t anyone who isn’t afraid of teachers”). She then went on to talk about how when visitors came to the school, her eyes looked to see if there was a stick in the teacher’s hand in case someone did something valea - stupid.

Consistent with the belief ‘O le mata’u i le Atua o le amataga lea o le poto’ (Fear of God is the beginning of cleverness/wisdom), several participants suggested that fear was essential in the child-adult relationship. Without fear children would not listen, obey, and learn. Indeed, when adults talked about a disobedient child they often said, “E le fefe le tamaititi” (The child is not afraid/has no fear). In the same way that adults need to be mata’u - fearful and obedient towards God, children also need to be mata’u - fearful and obedient towards their parents and teachers. Fear, ensuring deference and obedience, is the foundation of learning.

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151 Fear in the student-teacher relationship is discussed in Chapter Four.
Ochs (1988) recognised this and described fear as an important strategy used by adults to maintain social control over children.\textsuperscript{152}

Mageo (1988; 1998) did not explicitly focus on fear, but suggests that children are socialised into appropriate behaviours through the use of powerful negative sanctions. These include shaming, teasing and physical punishment. Ideally children respond by displaying inhibited behaviours (i.e. deference, respect, obedience, attentiveness). As stated earlier such behaviours are associated with academic success. Hence the caring teacher is prepared to physically punish a child in order to inculcate fear in the child and thus ensure that the child exhibits socially valued behaviours. Socially valued behaviours (from a Samoan perspective) in turn ensure academic success and the possibility that children can fulfil their filial obligation to their parents.

\textit{O le mea o le a ao i ai pe a lē faatouina e le faiaoga tamaiti, o le a ola e lē fefe tamaiti. Ma le lē kea i le faiaoga. Ma e pule ma saoloto i ana mea e fai. Ae a faamalosi ma fefe i le faiaoga, ona faatoa nauau foi lea e tuu lana amio. O le mea lena e ala ai ona lē fefefe tamaiti mai fafo, ona e lē saua faiaoga, aemaise o palagi. O i nei i Samoa, e tasi a le lafo o le upu, ae usitai. (If a child isn’t instructed/ordered the thing that will happen is that they will grow up not afraid. And not take any notice of the teacher. And they will just do as they like. But if [the teacher] is strict and [the child] is afraid of the teacher, the child will then put aside his bad behaviour. That’s the reason why overseas children are not afraid, because their teachers are not strict/harsh, especially palagi [e.g. white New Zealand or Australian] teachers. In Samoa, you only have to say something once and [children] obey - RT5.)}

\textit{Irresponsible parenting: the saoloto - free child}

Participants believed that to indulge and not discipline children is irresponsible on adults’ part. Children should not be left saoloto - to do as they please. Participants were highly critical of Pacific Rim teachers’ tendency to tuu saoloto - let (children) do as they please (i.e. not assert their authority over them). Participants believed that New Zealand laws banning corporal punishment and palagi - European teachers’ softness contributed to poor student behaviour, poor student results and the proliferation of criminal and anti-social behaviour in New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{152} Ochs (1988) suggests that there are four important strategies adults use to maintain social control. These are: a) simple directives; b) affect arousal (appealing to child’s feelings in order to get the child to comply; c) shaming; and d) fear.
Several participants suggested that whilst the gentle teacher appeared to love their students, in reality they did not. By allowing students to be *saoloto* – free, teachers failed to care about students’ well-being. Several students expressed dislike and disrespect towards such a teacher. Like the *faatatamala* - irresponsible/neglectful parent, the teacher who left children to do as they liked failed the child and shared responsibility for any socially undesirable outcome.

The children are not raised properly ... , they are not hit/smacked. The children are not corrected and told what they should do. They are just left - implied meaning- they won’t show the respect due to you as the teacher - RT1.

Students, parents and teachers often made links between the concept *faatonu* - order/instruct and physical punishment. Participants compared the teacher to a parent whose *tiute* - duty was to *faatonu* - order/instruct children lest:

If the teacher doesn’t order/instruct [children] it will have bad consequences. Even parents. There is no difference between teachers and parents. If parents don’t raise children properly, when they are older they will be bad. They won’t respect [literal - will make fun of] their parents - Rst1.

The good teacher and parent endeavoured to *unai* - urge, *faatonu* - instruct/order children towards what is good and right and if necessary reinforced their efforts with physical punishment.

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Participants believed that when adults failed to instruct, guide, correct and, if necessary, physically discipline children a range of negative consequences resulted. Firstly, children’s bad behaviour escalated. Secondly, they would not attend, listen and learn.

A le fasia e le faiaoga e atili ai le ulavale o le tamaititi ma le le faalogo. (If the teacher doesn’t hit the child he/she will be become naughtier and not listen/attend - UP1.)

A le fuea ua leaga tamaiti. Ua le fia faalogo mai i se upu a se faiaoga. E lelei le fue. (If the teacher doesn’t hit/smack, children will be bad. They won’t want to listen/attend to what the teacher is saying. Hitting is good - Ust5.)

E sasa e aoao. A le sasa, e tutupu mai ai isi faafitafuli. (You hit to teach. If you don’t hit, other problems will arise - UT3.)

When parents and teachers failed to instruct and, if necessary, discipline their children, they unwittingly turned the adult-child relationship upside down. As one rural parent stated:

E le lelei. Aua e pei ua pule le tamaititi i le faiaoga. Ae e tatau ona pule le faiaoga i tamaiti. Faatou i ai mea e tatau ona fai. (It’s not good, because it’s as if the child is in charge of the teacher. But the teacher should be in charge of children. [They] should instruct the child as to what they should do - RP1.)

Parents and teachers who failed to instruct and discipline children brought hardship on themselves. Rather than the child learning to be responsible, doing well at school, finding employment and caring for his/her parents, the child would taa - roam about and “E iu ina tigaiga ai matua.” (In the end the parents will suffer - Rst5.)

Undisciplined children brought shame on themselves and their families. Participants used strong, emotive language to describe how people felt about children who did not know how to behave appropriately. Teachers and parents needed to focus on children’s amio - behaviour, “Ta lelei le amio, ae aua le inosia e isi tagata” (To ensure that they behave, and that they are not hated by other people - RT1). Students and parents were keenly aware that their actions were observed and judged. Children were not perceived as isolated individuals (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000). Rather they were intimately linked to their immediate and extended family and village. A child’s bad behaviour reflected not only on the
child but also on their parents (Macpherson and Macpherson 1985; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Taleni 1998; Tuia 1999; Singh and Karen 2001).

Aua a leaga le amio e faahumaina ai matua. Ta 'u valea matua, ae lē ta 'u valea o ia. Ta 'u valea le aiga. 'Se i vaai ia i le tina e le aoaoa lana tama. ' E ta 'u valea le tina. 'Vaai i lana tama - e palauvale atu i tagata.' Faamataga ai le aiga. 'Poo ai le tina?' 'Poo fea e sau ai.' 'Poo ai sona tama?' 'Sei faatonu foi.' Aua o le tama a le tagata e faatonu ma sasa. Ae o le tama a le manu e lē aoaoa, e lē faatonu, e tuu lafoai. (Because if [a child] behaves badly the parents are shamed/embarrassed. Shame is brought upon the parents but not him/her. Shame is brought upon the family. 'Look at that mother - she hasn't taught/raised her child [properly].' Shame is brought upon the mother. 'Look at her son/daughter - swearing at people.' It makes the family look bad. 'Who is the mother?' 'Where does he/she [the child] come from?' 'Who is his/her father?' 'They should instruct/guide/discipline him/her.' Because the child of a human should be instructed/guided and hit. But the offspring of an animal is not taught, instructed [i.e. does not need to be taught]. They are left/ignored - Rst1.)

To love is to discipline

The idea that a child is a reflection of their parents is epitomised in Sia Figiel’s novel Where we once belonged. Main character, Alofa, states that, “Malaefou parents were defined by the actions of their children.” When a child swore or behaved badly, people blamed the mother. Conversely, “children in turn were defined by their parents’ wrath. Or lack of thereof” (Figiel 1996b: 219). The failure to instruct and, if necessary, physically discipline children is regarded as a failure to love them (Gerber 1985; O’Meara 1990; Va’a 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Tuia 1999; Singh and Karen 2001; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a). By indulging a child, parents risk that others might dislike and speak badly of their offspring. When my Samoan husband placed restrictions on our teenage offspring or when chiding them he frequently stated, “I don’t mind if my children don’t like me - as long as other people like my children.” He often described the indulgent, overly tolerant parent-child relationship as selfish love, where an adult was more concerned about gaining the child’s approval rather than asserting their will over the child. Significantly, other people’s perception of our children was of over-riding importance. When older relations visited from Samoa, we were both keenly aware of public face and would slip into being ‘firmer’ parents. This involved giving more directives than usual and setting tighter boundaries. Our offspring, well aware of the importance of public face and being ‘good’ hosts, endeavoured to anticipate requests, carried out tasks cheerfully, temporarily accepted tighter boundaries and willingly played at being obedient and obliging.

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In interviews, rural and town participants described parents who did not correct and, if necessary, physically discipline their children as *O matua le alofa* - parents who do not love their children. “O le tuufau, o le le alofa. A tuu e free, o lou le alofa i fanau.” (To let them do as they please, is to not love. If you let them be free, you do not love your children - UP3.) Fairbairn-Dunlop also found that caregivers described hitting as “as an act of love and duty” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a: 211), and necessary “to show our children the right way” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001b: 39). Significantly, most children accepted these adult definitions and applied them to their relationships with teachers.

*O le matou faiaoga e matua saua ia e saua ia. E le iloa onosa'i. E faatonutonu. E faatonutonu tamaiti. Ae a oo i le taimi ua ita ai, e ita (emphasis). ... E sasa ona o le alofa.* (Our teacher is very strict/cruel/harsh - he is strict/cruel/harsh. He does not know patience. He tells us what to do. He tells the children what to do. But when it reaches a point [time] that he is angry, he is angry [emphasis]. ... He hits us because he loves us - Rst5.)

*A sasa se isi e lo'u faiaoga, e sa le tagi. Matou, e sasa ma ata. O loo faapea, o le sasa o le ita e le faiaoga. Sasa - o upu o le alofa la e fai mai. La e aaoa oe.* (When you get hit by the teacher, it is forbidden to cry. We get hit and smile. Some think, the teacher is hitting because he is angry. Hitting - it's another expression [word] for love. It teaches you - Rst5.)

Alofa in *Where we once belonged* reiterates this idea.

Being beaten up is alofa - love. Real love is when children are beaten up bad by their parents. Teach the child while he's a child so that he will know when he becomes a man. This is in the Bible. This, too, is written in the earth of Malaeiou. To beat a child is to give her respect, to teach her how to behave, to teach her to be humble, to listen, to obey, to love her (Figiel 1996b: 219).

Similarly, Sofia Daly in *my own shade of brown* recalls growing up in Samoa with frequent physical punishment and remembers that, “Everytime my parents gave me a hiding they said that they loved me and that they didn’t want me to be bad” (Mulitalo 2001: 89).

Students and parents recognised an apparent contradiction between action and motive. Whereas some students might think a teacher cruel or harsh when they hit, the *poto* - wise/clever student recognised that the teacher acted in their best interests. The apparently *saua* - cruel/harsh teacher was in fact loving and caring.

*E faapea tamaiti, e ala ona fasi matou o le saua o le faiaoga. Ae leai. E ala ona fasi e le faiaoga tamaiti, e mana'o (pause), e naunau le faiaoga ia manau a latou meaaoaga.* (Children think that the teacher hits them because he is cruel/hard. But no. The reason the teacher hits children, is because he wants [pause], he intensely wants them to understand their work - Rst1.)
The child feels that the teacher is hard/cruel. [But] the teacher earnestly wants [the child] to be clever and do their schoolwork. ... The harshness is so that the child will know why they have been hit - UP3.)

Freeman (1984) suggests that the link between punishment and caring is deeply embedded in the Samoan psyche. In his refutation of Mead he argues that children in their first year of life generally develop strong primary bonds with their mothers. Subsequently, the mother and other authority figures use physical punishment (and other negative sanctions) in order to socialise children into appropriate behaviours. Thus the child-mother relationship is in many instances “experienced as alternatively caring and punishing” (ibid.: 210). Freeman and Mageo (1998) suggest that this often creates feelings of ambivalence towards authority figures. Thus the child simultaneously loves and fears the punishing adult. This analysis has interesting analogies with the already discussed Samoan conception of the Christian God. Jehovah is visualised on the one hand as a God of love and on the other hand as an angry, punishing God. Thus God is simultaneously loved and feared.

Teachers and parents did not approve of punishment that resulted in physical injury or punishment that had no apparent justification. Most described physical punishment as a final resort, after one had attempted to faatonu - instruct/order and unai - urge children towards the desired behaviour. When all else failed, the parent/teacher hit or smacked the offending child.

Nana lou alofa - hide your love

In addition to the belief that disciplining one’s children (through instructing/guiding and if necessary hitting) was a responsible and loving act, parents also believed that good parents endeavoured to hide their love.

An urban parent described how he hid his love and used his ‘authoritative’ voice with a story. Anxious about the busy town road beside the local school, he forbade his two young sons to cross the street to the shop. One day he arrived to find his boys sucking icepops. He took the icepops, threw them on the ground and told the boys to walk home (approximately five kilometres distance). He then continued in English, “My wife was crying in case one of the children got run over. ... As I drove home I prayed to God to protect them. I hid my love in order to discipline them” (UP5).

Gerber explored different linguistic terms associated with the word alofa - love and concluded that alofa “serves to guide behaviour towards particular moral aims, and reinforces the important Samoan value of mutual assistance and support between kin” (1985: 152). In interviews in this study, children and adults were portrayed as expressing their love in quite different ways. Adults (high status) demonstrate their alofa - love to children (downwards) by directing, chiding, guiding and if necessary physically disciplining their children (low status). Mageo (1998) suggests that the act of disciplining creates distance in the adult-child relationship, helps establish status boundaries and relations of respect, deference and appropriate social space. Adults endeavour to hide demonstrative and indulgent expressions of love lest children become spoiled (Gerber 1985; Mageo 1988; Tanielu 1997; Mageo 1998). Children (low status) in turn demonstrate their alofa by obeying, respecting and serving adults (high status) (Gerber 1985; Shore 1996). Shore and Gerber (ibid.) note that alofa is not necessarily associated with pleasure and intimacy. Rather alofa is often associated with feelings of obligation. Indeed, demonstrations of love might involve uncomfortable and negative feelings, especially when a person is obliged to act against their will.

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152 Freeman (1984) bases this claim on his observation that when a Samoan mother attempts to wean her infant, the child often becomes severely distressed and, in some cases, unwell.
The nature of children

Parents and teachers recognised that children were not all the same. Some grew up in small, nuclear families, whilst others grew up in large extended multi-generation households. Some grew up with parents who were profoundly influenced by outside ideas and others grew up in more traditional households. Parents and teachers recognised that a child’s home environment influenced how the child behaved at school and the child’s response to potential or actual physical punishment. One rural teacher noted:

O isi tamaiti e ola mai i se aiga filemu. E fefe i le pao. Pei o la’u fanau. A lea tele le faiaoga, pe ta le laupapa, e te’i. (Some children grow up in quiet/peaceful families. They are afraid of loud noise. Like my children. If the teacher uses a loud voice or hits the blackboard, they get a fright - RT4.)

She recalled her youngest son rushing into her classroom, crying because his teacher had struck the board. On another occasion he arrived crying because the teacher spoke harshly. Laughing, she noted that other children only begin to take notice of teachers when they struck the board or raised their voice. Finally, she contrasted her son’s softness with girls in his class who did not cry when hit. Several other teachers stated that the way a child had been brought up influenced how teachers related to them. Some children were always attentive and obedient. Others responded quickly to a sharp verbal rebuke and some only responded when they thought they might be hit. Some teachers noted that children who were constantly hit or smacked at home did not respond unless the teacher approached them in a similar manner.

Underlying the belief that teachers’ primary role is to inculcate appropriate behaviour in children are stated and unstated beliefs and understandings about the nature of children. Contemporary Western theories argue against the use of physical punishment. Punishment is perceived as an infringement of children’s rights as well as potentially damaging to the emerging individual. Contemporary western socialisation is based on the premise that provided a child is loved and good behaviour reinforced, the child will “develop his or her own inner resources of self-discipline and control” ... and that “the child will choose constructive behaviours that will benefit both the child and other members of the child’s social world” (Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996: 140). This understanding of children stands in stark contrast to many Samoan beliefs and understandings.
In Samoa young children are perceived as inherently selfish and aggressive (Sutter 1980), mischievous, naughty, and hard to control (Ochs 1988). In rural and urban schools, Year 1 students were surprisingly noisy. When the teacher asked a question, they shouted out, "O a'u! O a'u!" (Me! Me!), to get the teacher’s attention, waved their arms in the air, wriggled and pushed. The noisy clamouring of the Year 1 students sharply contrasted with the orderly and quiet behaviour of older students. Teachers and parents excused their behaviour saying, "E pau a. E laitiiti" (That’s just the way they are. They’re little). Associated with being little was the idea that children had not yet developed mafaufau – the ability to consider, reflect and think.

_E pau a o tamaiti laiti. E taalo. E pisapisa o. E le o mafaufau foi._ (That’s the way small children are. They play. They make a noise. They don’t think - RP2.)

_O tamaiti laiti. Ua pisapisa o. E le o lava le mafaufau._ (Children who are small. They make a lot of noise. They don’t have enough sense/thought - RP6.)

_O tamaiti e amio faataamaiti, ae o le tagata matua, e lava ma totoe lona ola aaoa. Ua iloa. E oo atu ina matua ua iloa faavasega le leaga ma le lelei._ Mea lena. (Children have the nature of children but an adult has acquired enough common sense/learning. They know/understand. When a person becomes an adult they know the difference between what is bad and what is good. Those things - UP2.)

Participants believed young children had not learnt the difference between what was right and wrong (i.e. socially appropriate behaviour). Children were frequently described as amio le pulea - behaving without restraint or thought. The concepts, amio - conduct/behaviour and aga - manner of acting are highly relevant to understanding adult beliefs about children. Shore (1982) describes amio as “a conception of natural impulse” (ibid.: 167) that is primarily selfish. He identifies common amio prefixes like amio puaa - to behave like a pig and amio leaga - to behave badly/selfishly. Likewise in interviews, participants frequently used the term amio le pulea - uncontrolled/ undisciplined/ unthoughtful behaviour. By contrast aga is frequently used in reference to “culturally derived aspects of behaviour” (ibid.: 167). Aga is used to prefix agamalu - gentle/peaceful disposition, and agalelei - good/kind/generous natured. Relevant to children’s behaviour, Shore also suggests that amio implies disorder,

154 It is important to note that the prefixes amio and aga are not restricted to these groupings. Amio is sometimes used to prefix adjectives that refer to socially valued dispositions. For example, amio is used as a prefix for amiotonu - righteousness, right conduct (Pratt 1912) and amiolelei - good conduct/well behaved (Allardice 1985). Likewise aga is sometimes used to prefix adjectives that refer undesirable dispositions.
impulse expression and action. By contrast *aga* suggests neatness/order, impulse control and passivity.

Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a) builds on Shore’s distinction between *amio* and *aga*. She suggests that Samoans have a pessimistic view of human nature where “Samoan actions are conceptualised as being predominantly governed by *amio* (selfish, potentially socially disruptive impulses): individuals will not act ‘well’ from choice or from freedom of will” (ibid.: 220). Fairbairn-Dunlop suggests that Samoan society has numerous rules (and sanctions) as a means “to help control the *amio* and direct people’s behaviour into socially acceptable channels” (ibid.: 220). Given such a view of human nature it is not surprising that Samoans place a strong emphasis on appropriate behaviour. In this context, caring adults unremittingly *fautua* - advise and *faatonu* - instruct/order children, use negative sanctions (including physical punishment) and place strong emphasis on public audience and surveillance as a means of social control.

Fairbairn-Dunlop goes on to describe *aga* as social action that is conditioned by external judgement and socially affirmed. Mageo (1998) notes that whilst *aga* is frequently used in reference to the socially proscribed self, it is also used to mean take on a role. Indeed it could be argued that the two meanings fuse at the point of human action. To behave in socially proscribed ways involves an element of performance. A child’s display of respect, courtesy and obedience towards an adult may not actually reflect the child’s true emotions.\(^{155}\)

In summary, parents and teachers saw the young child as essentially *le mafaufau* - lacking thought, tending to be *amio le pulea* - uncontrolled/undisciplined, *ulavale* - mischievous and *faaloggogata* - disobedient. The duty of the good parent and teacher was to constantly *fautua* - advise and *faatonu* - instruct/order children so that they became *poto* - clever/wise and *mafaufau* - considerate/thoughtful/sensible. When the child did not respond, the responsible and caring adult asserted his authority and if necessary, physically disciplined the child. Indeed several parents and teachers suggested that smacking was the sole method that would turn children around and enable them to become *poto*.

_E pau a le auala e foia ai, o le sasa. E tuutuu i lalo le bad behaviour o le tamaitiitii.... Aua o tamaiti Samoa, oka se rude le amio._ (The only way to change

\(^{155}\) Discontinuity between feelings and actions is discussed in Chapter Four.
[the child’s bad behaviour] is to hit. To cut down the bad behaviour of the child. ... Because Samoan children are so badly behaved/rude - UT2.)

A faaalo le tamaitititi i le sasa ma le ta, e poto ai. E poto ai le tamaitititi. ... E ilogofia le tamaitititi Samoa la e sasa. A lē sasa e lē iloa le mea e ratau ona fai. (If children feel the hit and strike they will become clever/wise. They will become clever/wise. ... You can easily tell the Samoan child who is disciplined. If they’re not hit, they won’t know what they should do [implied meaning - they won’t know how to behave] - UT1.)

Moral agendas and the role of the teacher

In interviews, participants often linked the term amio - conduct/behaviour to anti-social behaviours and loss of control. Participants hinted at the idea that a child’s amio could erupt if given half a chance. Socialisation involved the displacement of amio with socially prescribed qualities and actions. The caring adult disciplined the child in order to suppress the child’s inherent bad or selfish impulses. Children were described as “ova le amio” (displaying over-the-top behaviour [i.e. badly behaved] - RT4), and “rude le amio” (showing rude/disrespectful behaviours - UT2). When children were amio lē pulea - behaved without control/restraint (i.e. were rude/disrespectful), responsible adults would “taumafai e gagau le amio” - (try to break their amio - RP4). This responsibility fell on parents and teachers alike. The purpose of schooling was to “aoao latou amio” (teach them [i.e. children] how to behave - UT5 and Ust4).

E te sau i le faaleaoga (pause) e te sau foi e ao lau amio. E faatou oe i le sasa ma le fue. (The reason you go to school is to learn how to behave. You are taught by being hit and smacked - Rst1.)

O le isi mea e tatau ona aoao e tamaiti, o le amio. Ina ia lelei le latou va fealoaloai. ... Ae maiasi le faaalaloa. (The other thing you should teach children is behaviour/conduct. So that they will establish respectful relationships. Especially respect - RT6.)

O le amio. Aua, e i ai isi tamaiti e sau mai o latou aiga e spoilt le faiga. E faapelepeleina e matua. Ma le lē aoaoina lelei le amio. E amio lē pulea. (Behaviour/Conduct. Because some children arrive at school spoilt by their family. They have been indulged by their parents. They haven’t been taught how to behave properly. They are unruly/undisciplined - RT1.)

That teachers saw their role in this kind of way was illustrated in a fascinating exchange in a Year 5 rural class. The teacher instructed her students to read in unison a solo – poem about
the value of learning. She then began to question the students as to the purpose of school. As indicated in the excerpt, the teacher answered most of her own questions. In most cases she did not provide time for students to respond.

Teacher "O le a le mea ua omai outou i le aoga?" (Why do you come to school?)

Several students respond "Iloa mea e fai." (To know what to do.) "E iloa le usitai." (To know how to be obedient.) "Faaaloalo." (Respect.)

Teacher "E sau i le aoga ia maua le poto ma le malamalama." (You come to school to become poto [wise/clever] and gain understanding [literally - light].)

Teacher "O le a le mea e maua mai le poto?" (What do you gain from becoming poto?)

Teacher "E maua le manuia." (You will be blessed/have good fortune/well-being.)

Teacher "O le a ni faamaniuaga e maua mai le poto?" (What kind of good fortune/blessings do you gain from becoming poto?)

Student responses "Galuega." (Work.) "Usitai." (Obedience.), Faaaloalo." (Respect.)

Teacher "Agalelei, usitai, loto fesoasoani, alofa, faamaoni." (A kind/good nature, obedience, willingness to help, love, honesty.)

Teacher "O le a maua le galuega lelei, pei o le galuega i se ofisa, leoleo, faiaoga, loia, fomai." Students called out two contributions which teacher incorporated into her list. (You find good work, like work in an office, being a policeman, teacher, lawyer, doctor.)

Teacher "O fea le mea e maua ai le manuia o matua?" (Where do parents find well-being/good fortune?)

Teacher "E maua mai le fanau." ([They] will get it from the children.)

Parents and most teachers believed that the teachers’ primary responsibility was to teach students how to behave appropriately. Appropriate behaviour was not only important for immediate social goals (i.e. displaying relations of respect, courtesy, deference and obedience to elders). Appropriate behaviour was also seen as the foundation of academic success. However, unless children had taken on board a sociocentric/communal orientation, their academic success was in vain. As Helu Thaman’s (1988) observed in Tonga, the purpose of education was to gain a qualification and good employment in order to fulfil social and moral obligations (i.e. support parents, contribute to extended family, church and village). Unless children took on board these core social values, attitudes and demeanours, education was without purpose.

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156 This solo is taken from a Year 5 PEMP resource. Refer to Appendix xii for a copy of the solo.
Once e lelei le amio - o lona uiga e lelei uma isi vaega. Ona tuu mai loa o le curriculum. Toaga mai le tamaititi i le aoga, alofa i ona matua, ava i soo se tagata e fetau i le auala, ma iloa tautala ma tu i totonu o le aoga, ava i faiaoga. Ia maua e ia le lagona ia tautala ma le faaloalo. (Once [the child’s] behaviour is good - that means other things will also be fine. Then you can get on with the curriculum. The child will work hard at their school work, love his/her parents, respect people he/she mets on the road no matter who they are, and know how to behave and speak properly [use respectful form of language] at school. Respect the teacher. He/she will have the desire [literal - feeling] to speak properly [i.e. with respect] - RT3.)

Students, parents and teachers saw students as primarily responsible for their own success or failure at school. Success and failure were closely linked to moral characteristics. Students, parents and teachers described successful children as toaga - conscientious, usitai - obedient, faaaloalo - respectful and faalogo - attentive/listening. By contrast weak students were described as taa - roaming about, malosi le taalo - playing about, le faalogo - inattentive/not listening, faalogogata - naughty [literally – to have difficulty being attentive], paie - lazy, faatamala - irresponsible, le usitai - not obedient and finally le alofa - uncaring/unloving.

E ala ona vaivai (le tamaititi), e tele le paie, taalo. E le faalogo. E le usitai i le faiaoga. O le mea lena e manua ai ona vaivai. (The reason why [a child] is weak is because they are lazy, playing about. They don’t listen. They don’t obey the teacher. That’s the reason why they are weak - RPl.)

O tamaiti ua vaivai (pause), o le problem ua vaivai, aua ua ulavale. E le faalogo. (Children who are weak [pause]. The reason they are weak is because they are naughty/mischievous. They don’t pay attention/listen - Rst5.)

Students and parents believed that when teachers ignored childrens’ behaviour their schoolwork suffered. For this reason, some rural parents did not want their children to have a palagi – European/white teacher.

E te iloa e ahu i lalo. E alualua’e i lalo lana aoga aua ua le fai atu le palagi. Ua tuu saoloto (tamaititi aoga) e le palagi. E leai se alualu i luma. (You know, [the student’s position in class/achievement] would go downhill. Their work would go down and down because the palagi [white New Zealand/Australian etc.] won’t tell them [what to do/how to behave]. He/she would let them do as they like. They would make no progress - RP2.)

157 Chapter Two discusses the relationship between academic success and moral qualities.
In students’ reports, teachers’ comments focused almost exclusively on student behaviour and moral qualities. Comments were almost always negative, reflecting the belief that to praise a child might make them big-headed and not work as hard. In a review of Year 3 reports from rural school Folau, the teacher admonished all except the top student. The second student was told “Toe taumafai atili ina ia sili atu. Toaga e suesue i au meaaoga. Malo le onosai” (Try again even harder to get a better result. Be conscientious about studying your schoolwork. Well done for patience). Comments for other top students included “E tatau ona sili atu pe a toaga” ([You] should do better if [you] work hard - 3rd place), “Malo le taumafai ae manaomia le toaga e fai meaaoga i taimi uma” (Well done, but what’s needed is to work hard at school work all the time - 4th place), and “Toe taumafai atili. Toaga e fai meaaoga ae tuu le taalalo” (Try even harder. Be conscientious about schoolwork and stop playing - 5th place). The report for the top Year 6 student is equally interesting. In English, she scores 68/100 and is first in class. The teacher writes, “Malo le taumafai. Ia sili atu i lea kuata.” (Good effort. Get a better result next term.) In Maths, she scores 64/100 and is again first. The teacher writes, “E le o le togi nei e tatau ona maua. Toe taumafai.” (This is not the mark [you] should have got. Try again.) Finally, in Science she is again top with a score of 54/80. The teacher writes, “A tuu le paie ae suesue ona sili lea ona lelei.” (If [you] stop being lazy and study [you] would do better.). In each instance, the teacher uses a regulative discourse (i.e. to do with behaviour) rather than a discursive one (i.e. to do with what a student knows and can do).

**Teachers and parents: working together**

Parents and teachers strongly believed that they should o faatasi - work [literal - go] together and support each other in how they related and disciplined children. Several stated, “E leai se eseeseega o matua ma faiaoga” (There is no difference between parents and teachers). Students, too, conceptualised teachers as parents. Hence the good student obeyed, listened and attended to the teacher as they would a parent.

*O ou matua muamua o ou matua i le fale. Ae sau i le aoga, o le faiaoga o le matua lona lua. E te faalogo lelei i le faiaoga aua o le faiaoga o le isi matua ia te oe.*

(Your first parents are your parents at home. But when you come to school, the

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158 Reports varied between levels within the school. Junior school reports tended to give subject grades, A to E, overall place in class and a short written comment at the end. Middle and Senior school reports gave place in class for each subject area, and sometimes for areas within a subject (e.g. Written English, English structure, Word Study), sometimes grades and written comments.
teacher is your second parent. You listen carefully/attend carefully to the teacher because the teacher is another parent to you - Rst1.)

Participants believed that if parents and teachers stood together and were ‘tasi le leo’ - one voice (i.e. gave children the same message about how to behave) all would be well. Several participants expressed concern that if teachers and parents did not support each other, children might go off track. Again participants inferred an inherent ‘naughtiness’ in children and feared that given the slightest opportunity, they would be led astray.

La tutusa lava le taumafai o le fai'aoga la e fai nei i le fa'aeoga ma le taumafai o matua. La lagona e le tamaititi ... (inaudible section) o le mea tonu la e fai mai ai lo 'u tina ma lo 'u tama, ae o lea fai, ua fai mai ai le matou fai'aoga. (The teacher at school and the parent should have the same goals. So the child feels, ... what my mother and father is saying is the same as what our teacher is saying - RP4.)

Consistent with the belief that teachers and parents should be one voice, rural parents seldom interfered when teachers disciplined their children. Most saw school as the teacher’s territory and responsibility and few challenged their authority. When a teacher disciplined their child:

E leai se ita, pe a jaapea, ua alu atu (si a 'u tama) ma ua fasi e le fai'aoga. ... Pule le fai'aoga, poo a ana mea e fai i ai. Pe fasi, pe a. (There is no anger when the teacher hits [my child]. ... It's up to the teacher, to do whatever she likes. To smack or whatever - RP2.)

Ma o lo 'u talitongo faaletina (pause). La te a 'u lava, e le aia a 'u ia. E pule le fai'aoga. ... E pule lava ia. Faitalia le fai'aoga. (My belief as a mother (pause). From my perspective, I will not interfere. The teacher is in charge. ... He/She is in charge. The teacher can do as he/she likes - RP4.)

In town schools the unquestioning respect of the teacher was not as apparent. As discussed earlier in this chapter, some parents, especially those who had been educated overseas, challenged teachers’ right to hit their children.

Exploring links: physical punishment and hierarchical relationships

Samoa has frequently been described as a hierarchical society (Shore 1982; Odden and Rochat 2004; Freeman 1984; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996). Odden and Rochat suggest that status relations and rank profoundly influence child-rearing patterns. In Samoa, adults “tend to initiate, control and regulate interactions with the child” (Odden and Rochat 2004: 42). Schoeffel and Meleisea (1996) describe children as
located at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Positioned as such, children have limited rights. Children are socialised to display respect, obedience, and be *tautua* - of service towards their elders. A central principle in the *faaSamoa* is that the person “who disobedies the instructions of those in authority should duly be punished” (Freeman 1984: 274). Both Mageo (1988) and Freeman (1984) describe punishment as an assertion of higher status and authority. When teachers and parents hit children, they assert their authority, clarify and maintain boundaries, and instil respect and deference.

Respect, deference and control are closely linked. Respect for parents and teachers is transformed into an unwillingness to challenge teachers and their actions. In interviews, parents and teachers linked physical punishment to the assertion of authority. An urban parent (UPS), despite being heavily involved in the Mormon Church (which discourages the use of corporal punishment), was adamant that “If a child is not disciplined and punished they will have no sense of obedience and respect.” Implied is the idea that fear is intrinsic to authority relations in Samoa (Shore 1996). In an earlier work, Shore (1982) describes authority relations in Samoa as “ranked complementary relationships” and “unequal relationships between logically or functionally dissimilar units” (ibid.: 214). In such relations, “the lines of authority are clearly delineated, boundaries are explicit, control is unambiguously externalised and power relations are structurally stable” (ibid.: 214).

Conclusion

*New Zealand:* “Teachers are being punched, kicked, and verbally abused and say padded jackets and panic buttons are needed to keep them safe from violent pupils.” (Otago Daily Times, 23 September, 2004: 16).

Samoan parents are keenly aware of discipline issues in some New Zealand schools and the wider society. News items filter through to Samoa and are often mentioned in conversation and local media. In interviews, participants associated the escalation of behaviour problems and crime in Pacific Rim countries with the failure to adequately discipline children and instil in them respect for adults. In the same way that negative images of Pacific Rim children and youth flow into Samoa, so too do competing ideologies as to what constitutes good parenting.
In Samoa, physical discipline is becoming an increasingly contested discourse and practice. Mission, colonial, and more recently the increased flow of ideas across national boundaries have challenged Samoan beliefs, understandings and practices. The issue of physical punishment in schools and the wider society is “grounded in a host of other complex issues such as ideas about power, status and appropriate roles, child rearing practices, human rights, justice and beliefs about public and private responsibility” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001b: 38). In this chapter, I have explored some of these issues, drawing heavily on interview material to reveal local perspectives and understandings. Almost all participants believed that the restrained use corporal punishment is central to being a good and caring teacher and parent. However, there is a small but increasing number of urban parents who question its use in schools.

As stated in earlier chapters, primary education in Samoa closely aligns with Bernstein’s visible pedagogy (1975; 1996). Such pedagogies are typified by strong hierarchical relationships, clear boundaries and explicit rules. When students break rules, rapid, specific and visible sanctions including physical punishment follow. In Samoa, interesting contradictions emerge between the official pedagogy and the day-to-day realities of school. Official documents (e.g. a detailed and prescriptive curriculum) focus on discursive aspects of learning (knowledge content and skills), but in the classroom, children, parents and teachers placed huge emphasis on appropriate behaviour. In primary education in Samoa, regulative discourse (i.e. discourse about appropriate behaviour) has become the unofficial and valued curriculum. However, as noted by Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a), problems arise when educational policy (e.g. MESC’s ban of physical punishment) differs from the values, beliefs, understandings and practices of many parents. Indeed, many teachers felt caught between the dictates of educational policy and their own beliefs, preferred practices and patterns of relationships.

Fairbairn-Dunlop (ibid.) asks what should be the role of schools in the debate over physical punishment. Should schools support home values or be agents of change? Similarly, Liu (1991) asks if education is about the reproduction of existing social structures and practices or about the production of “discourses of resistance” (ibid.: 150). Significantly, Liu criticises schools in Samoa as agents of colonisation and suggests that schools could instead become sites for the recovery and reconstruction of culture. However in this instance, colonising forces continue in the form of the global flow of ideas (i.e. Western ideas about appropriate
adult-child discipline) and schools - rather than becoming sites of cultural recovery and reconstruction - have become sites of contestation and change. From the perspective of many parents and teachers, the MESC ban of corporal punishment actively undermines core cultural values, beliefs and practices. Indeed some participants believed that ‘the way things ought to be’ had literally been turned upside down. In town schools, teachers increasingly struggled to assert their authority over students, and students and their parents increasingly dared to challenge teachers’ authority.

Angus (2004) proposes that at the microlevel, the global flow of ideas is mediated by ‘actors’ (i.e. people). Apparent in Samoa is a multiplicity of actors representing multiple voices within and between different groups in society. Indeed, interview responses indicate a multiplicity of voices within the individual. Individuals frequently expressed apparently contradictory perspectives as to what constituted good parenting and appropriate discipline. As one town parent explained, you might think hitting is bad, but when one of your own children is flagrantly rude, you revert to old ways and slap them.

Students, parents, and teachers were remarkably self-conscious about their beliefs, understandings, and values relating to discipline. Consistent with Kuhn’s (1962) theory that when paradigms are threatened, formerly tacit understandings are transformed into explicit and self-conscious discourses, students, parents, and teachers readily contrasted Western and Samoan perspectives. This was apparent in an urban parent’s (UP5) discussion about his childhood, where he recalled harsh, arbitrary and frequent physical punishment. He reflected in depth on the Mormon Church’s position (i.e. the importance of parent-child bond, strong parental authority, disapproval of physical punishment), his spouse’s views, his observations of parenting and children in the United States, and his own experience. There was a strong sense of agency. He wanted life to be different for his children. Conversely he did not want leaga - bad, mataga - spoiled children. Hence he resolved that there was a place for occasional corporal punishment provided that it was balanced by love. In his words, “After I smack my child, I hug them and tell them how much I love them.”

Similarly, Samoan parents in Pacific Rim countries juxtapose and navigate traditional and new understandings, beliefs, values, and practices. Va’a (1995) found Samoans in Australia keenly aware of the wider society’s disapproval of physical punishment, sharply critical of aspects of Australian parenting and tending to modify their discipline methods over time in
response to different contexts and discourses. This sense of agency is caught by Mulitalo (2001) in her interviews with Samoan migrants in New Zealand. Parent, Sofia Daly, recalls growing up in Samoa and states emphatically, “I don’t want my children to be brought up the way I was. My upbringing was driven by physical punishment” (ibid.: 91). Conversely, migrants wanted their children to understand the faaSamoa - Samoan way and know how to behave appropriately.

In this research, rural and town students, parents and teachers were remarkably consistent in their beliefs, values and understandings about corporal punishment. For the most part parents and teachers were uncomfortable with MESC’s ban of physical punishment in schools. Significantly, educational policy in Samoa is profoundly influenced by Western understandings about the nature of children, what constitutes a good education and appropriate student-teacher relationships. Consistent with Angus’s observation (2004) that the global flow of ideas is mediated by social actors, educational policy in Samoa is largely shaped by Samoans who have gained tertiary qualifications in Pacific Rim countries. Thus a minority, socially advantaged group creates policy that is perceived by many to be at variance with the beliefs, values, attitudes and understandings of the wider public. Fieldwork revealed a keen sense of tension as teachers and parents attempted to reconcile their beliefs and practices with present educational policy. Fairbairn-Dunlop recognises physical discipline as an area of contestation and suggests a ‘third space’ that might be reached by “active searching, by Samoans themselves, for understanding of the causes and effects of hitting behaviour, and the development of culturally appropriate and acceptable modifications of it” (2001a: 203). This chapter is an attempt to contribute to a third and locally generated space.
Chapter Six: Examinations - Colonial Imposition or Cultural Fit

This chapter looks at the Year 8 National Examination and explores why tests and examinations are central to primary education in Samoa. The chapter builds on ideas introduced in previous chapters. The emphasis on exams is consistent with ideas developed in Chapter Two, namely the economic constraints of living in a developing country and the importance of academic success in order to fulfill social obligations. In Chapter Three I suggested that assessment, curriculum, teaching practice, resources, infrastructure and the wider social setting are closely interlinked and shape each other. Chapter Four discussed beliefs and understandings about how children learn and what constitutes good teaching. These beliefs and understandings underpin assessment practices in Samoa.

In the past I taught Year 8 students in Samoa and prepared them for the Year 8 National Examination. This experience and subsequent work in educational assessment led to a personal interest in how high-stakes examinations impact on teaching, learning, classroom interactions and students' life chances. In this chapter I use the Year 8 National Examination as a case study. However, given that exams and tests pervade the primary education system the discussion becomes more general. During the course of this research I became increasingly fascinated by the contrasting discourses, understandings and beliefs about the Year 8 exam, exams in general and their place in education. The chapter explores these multiple and often conflicting positions.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The chapter begins with a short description of a) The entrenched 'exam culture' in primary education. I then look at b) The Year 8 National Examination and how it impacts on teaching and learning. The Year 8 exam and exams in general in Samoa are often described as alien, colonial legacies. In section c) Colonial imposition or a good fit? I suggest that this explanation is too simplistic. Under the heading d) Alternative Perspectives, I explore the idea that exams have a high level of educational, social and cultural fit and appeal. I then suggest that the call for more e) Authentic assessment: (represents) new forms of colonialism, albeit under the guise of aid projects and global flows of educational ideologies and practices. Finally, I propose in section f) A socio-cultural understanding of the place of exams in primary education in Samoa.

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The entrenched exam culture in primary education

Formal examinations and tests pervade primary and secondary education in government and mission schools in Samoa (Barrington 1968; Moli 1993; Petana-Ioka 1994; Coxon 1996; Tavana 1997; Sanerevi 1998; Afamasaga 1999; Male and Lameta 1999; Sooaemalelagi 2000). Indeed exams and tests are not restricted to school settings. Tanielu (1999; 2000b) recounts in detail how preschool and school-age children attend pastor school and prepare for and sit formal exams, where marks were tallied, converted to percentages, children ranked, and top students rewarded at much anticipated prizegiving ceremonies. In interviews, rural and urban students also talked about preparing for pastor school exams and competing with peers. More recently exams have been introduced into the relatively new phenomena of preschool education.

Today exams and tests are part of the everyday culture of government primary schools. From the moment students enter school until they leave they participate in weekly and monthly tests and term and/or bi-annual school exams. The results of monthly and term tests in the five core curriculum areas determine students’ rank in class. Test marks, percentages, subject ranking, and overall place in class are given in reports of most students. In rural schools, students’ places in class are announced in order (from top to bottom) at a prizegiving ceremonies at the end of the school year. In interviews, students and parents described prizegiving ceremonies as much anticipated family occasions.

The importance of tests and exams is clearly visible in the classroom. Seating arrangements are almost always determined by rank. Generally, students are grouped according to their aggregated exam/test results. Top achievers are seated near the front where formal instruction takes place. Low ranked students are located at the rear. In some classrooms students sit in rows in numerical order. Again top students occupy front areas and weak students back. In some schools test and exam results are displayed on classroom walls. In upper classes at Viliamu School, Progress Charts stretched the walls length, documenting each student’s monthly marks. On an opposite wall monthly results for each curriculum area ranked students from top to bottom.
In addition to school-wide tests and examinations students participate in a total of six national exams. During primary school Year 4 and 6 students sit SPELL tests in English, Samoan and Maths. Year 8 students sit the Year 8 National Examination, Year 11 the Junior Secondary School Certificate, Year 12 Samoa School Certificate, and Year 13 the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC). Framed exam results, graduation diplomas and photos frequently adorn walls in family homes.

Senior MESC staff gave several explanations as to why exams are so entrenched in Samoa. All felt that parents and political pressure drove the obsession with exams. One linked exams to limited economic opportunities, alternative forms of status-seeking and unrealistic parental expectations. Several described teachers and parents as products of an exam-orientated system and as lacking knowledge and awareness of alternative forms of assessment. From their perspective change could only come through concerted efforts to familiarise teachers and parents with alternative forms of assessment.

The Year 8 National Examination

Contested practice - the Year 8 National Examination

The Year 8 National Examination and the pervasive exam/test culture have long been a subject of contestation. New Zealand administration and later United Nations’ mission reports lamented entrenched exams/tests through government and mission primary schools and noted strong resistance to change (Barrington 1968). In the mid-1980s a Department of Education policy review recommended a single-stream secondary system with a broader, more practical and relevant curriculum. With no selection function the Year 8 National Examination was briefly abandoned in 1988. However, public and political pressure ensured its speedy reinstatement in 1989 (Moli 1993; Sooaemalelagi 2000).

The exam continues to be a matter of debate. Opinions fall into two broad camps. On the one hand MESC staff, teacher educators and Samoan researchers describe the exam as a problematic but medium-term solution. From this perspective the exam serves a selection
function necessitated by inequitable secondary options (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Lameta 2000). On the other hand, most interviewed teachers, almost all parents and all students wished to retain the exam and accepted the results as a fair and valid representation of student achievement. Division of opinion over exams is not a new phenomenon. International research shows exams frequently become a point of conflict between educators, educational experts and the general public and politicians. The public tends to focus on results, inflate the importance of an exam, and fail to recognise its impact on teaching and learning, and that multiple factors affect student performance (Gipps 1994; Irving 1998; Broadfoot and Pollard 2000; Madaus and Horn 2000).

The two camps also represent significantly different sectors of the community. MESC staff, teacher educators and researchers are Apia (town) based, tertiary educated (generally in a Pacific Rim country), well travelled, belong to a higher income bracket, and are more exposed to Western ideas and alternative educational philosophies and practices. By contrast interviewed primary teachers, parents and students were all educated in Samoa, less likely to have travelled overseas, less exposed to alternative educational ideas and practices, earned significantly less, and, from their perspective, competed from a disadvantaged position for limited resources.

One MESC staff member (Edex4) felt that parents’ unrealistic expectations drove their obsession with exams. Parents aspired to children succeeding academically and finding well-paid employment in Apia but these aspirations did not match the economic and social reality of Samoa. This position raises some interesting issues. The speaker’s privileged lifestyle epitomises the post school aspirations (i.e. tertiary educated with a well-paid Apia-based job) of all interviewed students and parents. Parents saw the Year 8 National Examination as a critical hurdle towards such a life style. For some, efforts to remove the exam, spend more time teaching in Samoan, and introduce a more ‘relevant’ curriculum (i.e. a curriculum that supported rural students towards a productive village life) smelt of ulterior motives. Specifically, they believed that such moves would lead to the subjugation of rural poor and entrenchment of the already advantaged position of the wealthy and powerful (Edex3, RT3).

159 MESC hopes that when a more equitable secondary school system is in place there will be no need for the Year 8 National Examination as a selection tool for secondary school. With the support of New Zealand and
Overview of Year 8 National Examination

The Year 8 National Examination was introduced during the New Zealand administration (Barrington 1968). Each year approximately 4000 students are examined in five subjects over five consecutive days. Each exam closely follows the national syllabus. The MESC Examination Unit oversees the development, review, printing, supervisor training, distribution, administration and marking processes. Each exam is worth 100 marks, two hours in length, and involves pencil and paper responses. In the past, papers were largely multiple choice. Now all papers include a short answer component. For example, Basic Science and Social Studies papers are 50% multiple choice and 50% short answer. Generally short answers involve one- or two-word responses. A very small percentage of questions fall into the extended, open-ended category. Despite recent efforts to include questions that demonstrate understanding and application of skills, questions primarily require recall of knowledge. All papers except Samoan are set in English and students are required to respond in English.

Students are given a percentage for each subject and a numerical grade. Each student’s English mark is combined with their mark in their top three subjects to give an aggregate score. Exam results are distributed to schools and each student receives a Year 8 Certificate with their results. The Year 8 National Exam is ‘high stakes’ in that students, teachers, and schools are judged by their performance in relation to it. Results are widely discussed, displayed and often reported by the media. Students’ grades also determine their secondary school options. In Samoa where there is a limited number of quality senior secondary schools, this has lifelong implications. Entry to ‘good’ secondary schools paves the way to success in senior secondary school national exams, access to ‘good’ town jobs, waged employment or tertiary education (Moli 1993; Petana-Ioka 1994; Coxon 1996; Lameta 1998; Male and Lameta 1999). Those who perform poorly, find themselves in Junior High Schools where there is a high dropout rate (Department of Education 2002), limited resources and a programme that is perceived by students, teachers, parents and the wider public as inferior.

The opportunity to teach at the Year 8 level was regarded with some ambivalence by teachers. On the one hand it represented an enormous amount of work with public scrutiny of the

Australian aid, a new national secondary curriculum is being developed. This initiative is part of the Samoa
outcome. On the other hand, the position carried kudos, implied that one was a good teacher and was perceived as a career step. Frequently principals opt to teach the Year 8 class themselves. Teachers perceived this as fetau - fitting/appropriate as the heavy Year 8 workload is matched by the principal’s higher salary. It was also perceived as fetau in that Year 8 results are the fua - result/fruit/outcome of students’ primary education and therefore reflect how well a Head Teacher fulfils his or her role as school leader. Furthermore, the exam provides an opportunity for the Head Teacher to demonstrate his/her teaching ability and therefore legitimacy as Head Teacher. One rural teacher recounted a School Review Officer (SRO) advising him not to accept a Year 8 position stating:

Aua o ia e nofonofo ma le totogi lapoa. Ma o ia le pule aoga (pause), o lana matafaioi i le galuega. O ia e tatau ona ave le Tausaga 8. La e tele le totogi. (Pause) Alu atu a 'u, e laititi le totogi ma tigaina e fai le galuega ae nofo ia e sapo ai le faamaniaga. (Because he/she [i.e. the principal] sits about collecting the big pay. And he/she is the principal (pause) that's his/her responsibility at work. He/she should take responsibility for the Year 8. [Because] he/she has the big pay. If I take the heavy burden with little pay, he/she will just sit back and catch all the praise/good results/good pay - RT3.)

Impact of the Year 8 National Examination and exam culture on teaching and learning

High stake examinations have the potential to drive teaching practice and student learning (Gipps 1994; Broadfoot 2000; Torrance 1997; Bray 1998; School of Education University of Queensland 2001). The higher the stakes, the greater the impact of an examination on teaching and learning (Madaus 1988 in Gipps 1994) and “the simpler the tools, the narrower and more constricting the impact” (Torrance 1997: 329). In Year 8 classes, teacher practice and student learning are driven by the Year 8 National Examination. In Samoa teachers shape their teaching to the form and content of exams (Petana-Ioka 1994; Coxon 1996; Sooaemalelagi 2000). If something is not tested it is regarded as unimportant. Likewise, students focus on learning material that they perceive as relevant to tests and exams.

Secondary Education Curriculum and Resources Project (Cox, Lameta, Goh, Finau 2002).

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The Year 8 National Examination contributes to a loss of valuable learning time and educational opportunity

The Year 8 National Examination dramatically impacted on how teachers and students used their time. Teachers endeavoured to cover the Year 8 syllabus by the end of the first term in order to spend the second and early third term reviewing Year 7 and 8 work. This involved: reteaching aspects of Year 7 and 8 syllabuses; students independently studying past notes and PEMP booklets; and students spending day upon day re-sitting past exam papers. These papers were then collectively marked, corrections entered, results tallied and recorded and contents sometimes discussed. Students also attended regular after-school classes, and sometimes Saturday or holiday classes. 80% of surveyed teachers began after-school classes by the start of Term Two. A third held Saturday classes and about a quarter holiday classes. In most instances, classes were held three to four times per week, for an average of one hour 45 minutes per day. In effect, the Year 8 National Examination meant that students spent less than one-third of the year on new learning. The opportunity for new learning was lost to revision, time spent sitting trial and actual exams and an attitude that post exam learning was not as important. The remaining seven weeks (post exam) were largely spent reviewing exam papers, ‘mucking around’, involved in dance, song, art and craft activities or physical education, determined by teacher motivation and resources. Some students expressed ambivalence about this period, describing it as tafao vale - roaming about or maimau taimi - wasted time.

No interview participant felt that exams meant lost learning time or opportunities. Indeed, exams were perceived as powerful motivators for both students and teachers. Participants felt that exams encouraged good study habits, pushed students to learn their work and make good use of class time. Some contrasted this with New Zealand classrooms where students are frequently perceived as uninterested in learning, off task and, at worst, truant. Later in this chapter, I explore these ideas in more depth and suggest that participants’ views reflect fundamentally different understandings as to what is knowledge and how children learn.

The Year 8 National Examination contributes to a narrowing of the curriculum

International research shows that when schools, teachers and students prepare for high-stakes formal exams they frequently restrict teaching and learning to the content and skills tested in the exam (Brown, McCallum et al. 1997; Croft, Crooks et al. 1998; Popham 1999; Broadfoot and Pollard 2000; Cassie 2000; Meadmore 2001; School of Education University of
Queensland 2001). In Samoa, educational researchers (Petana-Ioka 1994; Coxon 1996; Sooaemalelagi 2000) and interviewed MESC staff all felt that the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general narrowed the curriculum and influenced which subjects were valued and/or not valued. Fieldwork observations and interviews confirmed that Year 8 teachers focused almost exclusively on the five core subject areas. Teachers preferred not to diverge or extend the prescribed syllabus.

Year 8 students rarely engaged in Art, Physical Education, and Music activities. When pushed for an explanation they referred to imminent exams or lack of resources. One teacher suggested that what happened in schools directly depended on the leadership of the principal. This teacher noted that when a Head Teacher taught the Year 8 class, school-wide decisions were more likely to revolve around the needs of the Year 8 class. In this instance the Head Teacher discouraged sports activities during school time because it distracted her Year 8 class as they prepared for the exam (RT3). Only 20% of surveyed teachers linked the Year 8 National Examination to the narrow curriculum focus (QY8T) and no interviewed teacher or parent suggested that exams led to a narrow curriculum and thus compromised the quality of education. I suggest that these responses need to be understood within the wider educational setting. Firstly, teachers at all levels tend to restrict their teaching to core curriculum documents (Samoan, English, Maths, Basic Science and Social Science). These documents contain detailed lesson plans, lesson content, and teaching steps. As teachers have few other resources, class programmes are for the most part constrained to this and the supplementary PEMP material. Year 8 and other primary teachers in Samoa have not experienced working with loosely defined achievement objectives (as per New Zealand curriculum) in a richly resourced environment. I suggest that few teachers feel that exams constrain what and how they teach because they already work within a tightly constrained and poorly resourced curriculum.

160 Before developing the interview guide for Year 8 teachers, I prepared an open-ended Questionnaire (QY8T). The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain an over-view of teacher responses to the exam and use this to assist the development of interview questions. Responses to the open-ended questions proved remarkably consistent. Some of the responses to the questionnaire are included in this chapter.
The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general influence attitudes towards different subjects

Coxon (1996) and Petana-Ioka (1994) found that teachers and students undervalued and resisted subjects that were not part of the formal assessment process. MESC and FOE staff referred to ongoing efforts to encourage teachers to include Art, Music and PE. Despite repeated in-services there has been little change in pedagogy and content (Esera 1996; Redden 2002). Interestingly, the inclusion of these subjects in assessment shifted students’ perceptions. Several students (Ust1 and Ust2) referred to Art being important because a recent exam included a section requiring an illustration. One student added that Art was important if it was acknowledged by a grade and/or place.

Lameta (1998) argues that testing in English leads to an overemphasis on English and an undervaluing of Samoan. One urban teacher (UT1) described English as a thief that has stolen class time. Class visits and interview material confirmed heavy use of English in all subject areas, especially in Apia schools. Despite a clear MESC policy promoting bilingual education (Year 1 - Samoan only, Year 2 - 10% Oral English [spoken language], Year 3 - 20% Oral and Written English [reading and writing], Year 4 30%, Year 5 40% and Years 6-to-8 50%), teachers frequently chose to introduce English in Year One and use it as their primary medium of instruction at each level. Students, parents, and teachers repeatedly linked English competency with exam success, access to good high schools, tertiary education, and good employment. They also described Samoa as part of an increasingly globalised world, where the flow of people, goods, and media necessitated competency in English. Thus English was seen “as an important resource for economic, social and educational development and advancement” (Petana-Ioka 1994: 84) and linked to high status domains such as tertiary education, business and government employment (Moli 1993; Lameta 1998).

The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general encourage teachers to focus on subject knowledge and ignore other important aspects of learning

International research suggests that high stakes assessment leads to a focus on knowledge content, passing the test and getting good grades, rather than promoting understanding and developing higher level cognitive skills (Gipps 1994; Brown, McCallum et al. 1997; Broadfoot and Pollard 2000; School of Education University of Queensland 2001). These findings are consistent with observations in Samoa. Year 8 National Exam papers are largely made up of multiple choice and short answer questions that involve pencil and paper
responses. This kind of testing primarily requires students to recall information. In Year 8, teachers and students alike focused on recall of curriculum content, getting the 'right' answer and knowing something rather than understanding it. Relatively little time was spent on critical thinking activities, problem solving, and investigative skills. However, these areas were not a teaching focus at other year levels (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Department of Education 2000). Hence their absence reflected the wider school culture rather than just the Year 8 National Examination programme. Furthermore, the focus on knowledge content is consistent with core beliefs and understandings about what is important formal learning and how children learn.

Four of the five curriculum areas are examined in English. Teachers, parents and students explicitly linked exam success with English language competency and believed that instruction in English enhanced exam success. These beliefs led to a devaluing of the Samoan language and an inverse focus on English as a subject area, language of instruction and status. Lameta (1998) and Male and Lameta (1999) note that instruction in English leads to a focus on knowledge content and works against students and teachers engaging in cognitively challenging material. Students and teachers with limited English struggle with critical thinking and abstract thought. Cummins (1984) and LaCelle-Peterson (2000) state that it takes five to seven or seven to nine years respectively, before second language learners work on a par with first language speakers on cognitively challenging material. One Year 8 teacher described in detail the frustration of trying to get his Year 8 C class to discuss subject matter in English. He then compared the shift to Samoan to turning a light on. Only then were students prepared and able to engage in discussion. Similarly a rural student (Rst5) described a peer’s response to instruction in English, “Once the teacher speaks in English, she’s like a baby. She just stares because she doesn’t know the English. But when the teacher translates she wakes up. She was sleeping and she wakes up. Because she understands the language [i.e. Samoan].”

The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general lead to a focus on test taking strategies

Students spend an enormous amount of time in and out of class preparing for the Year 8 National Examination. Sooaemalelagi (2000) found that 91% of students felt well prepared for the exam and 97% had been taught how to sit exams. In the classroom, a large amount of time was spent resitting old exam papers. Teachers focused on familiarising students with
paper layout, common questions and question types, exam ‘tricks’, and time management. Overseas proponents of national testing point to improved scores as evidence of improved educational outcomes. Sheperd challenges this and suggests that improved scores reflect teaching to the test and students and teachers getting wiser about test taking strategies (Sheperd 1992 referred to in Gipps 1994). Furthermore time spent on teaching exam-passing strategies was time not spent on other forms of learning.

The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general encourage teachers to ignore weak students
Sheperd noted that some teachers ignored ‘hard to teach’ students (ibid.) when preparing for exams. In Samoa, almost a quarter of surveyed teachers (QY8T) suggested that the Year 8 National Examination encouraged teachers to focus on good students and ignore weak students. Classroom observations confirmed that this issue was not limited to Year 8. In all levels high achieving students generally sat close to the blackboard (i.e. closer to the teacher at times of formal instruction), received more teacher attention and were more likely to approach or respond to the teacher. These students’ books were more likely to be up-to-date, marked and corrected. In some classes, books belonging to weak students were largely unmarked or not corrected. Indeed, parents and students recognised that some teachers treated students differently. Some linked this to student ability. According to one urban parent, “E i ai tamaiti e atamamai. E fiafia i ai. E i ai tamaiti la e faatuatuanai - o tamaiti vaivai.” (There are children who are clever. [The teacher] likes them. [But] there are children he/she places at the back/ignores/forgets. The weak students - UP5.)

Some teachers referred to special after-school, holiday and/or Saturday classes for a select group of Year 8 students. Others referred to turning a blind eye when weak students chose not to attend after-school classes. Teachers produced strong and reasonable justification for their focus on ‘good’ students when preparing for the Year 8 National Examination.

E fai foi e a’u. E faatele la’u taimi i tamaiti lelei ona e ‘hopeful’. La e i ai le mea tatau. Ae a faatutusa loa tamaiti lelei ma tamaiti vaivai e lē maua loa le avanoa mo tamaiti (mo le Kolisi). ... E tele lo’u taimi i i. Ae faalaitiiiti i tamaiti vaivai. Aua o lo’u manatu e tatale pea le avanoa mo tamaiti popoto. (I do it too. Spending more time on children that there’s hope for [children that have a chance]. There is a good reason for it. If you spend the same amount of time on good and weak children there won’t be any chance for children to get in [to Samoa College]. ... I spend a lot of time on them [good students]. But only a little time on weak students. Because from my perspective the clever children still have a chance - RT6.)
Teachers recognised that they, their school, and the village were judged by the number of students (approximately 5%) who gained entry into prestigious schools (e.g. Samoa and Avele Colleges). They also recognised that entry to a good school had life transforming consequences. By focusing on the ‘best’ students, they believed that they could make a huge difference to these students’ lives. By contrast, weak students would be placed in Junior Secondary Schools independent of the effort invested in them.

The tendency for some teachers to focus on good students needs to be understood from within the wider socio-economic context. As previously discussed, Samoa is a small, developing, fiscally constrained country (Fairbaim-Dunlop and Associates 1998; Meleisea 2000; Asian Development Bank 2000). In this context, students and teachers at the Year 8 level compete for limited resources (i.e. placement in prestigious schools). Access to quality secondary schooling largely determines students’ post-school opportunities (tertiary education, good employment, and reasonable income) and ability to subsequently meet social obligations and participate in status-enhancing activities (e.g. faalavelave – culturally important events).

In contemporary New Zealand, egalitarianism, equality and equal opportunity are frequently used terms. However, these are not strong cultural values in Samoa and the wider Pacific. Samoa is a hierarchical society (Schoeffel 1979; Sutter 1980; Gerber 1985; Ochs 1988; Duranti 1990; Shore 1996; Tuia 1999; Poasa et al. 2000; Odden and Rochat 2004) and few people question the fact that some people possess more power, status and goods than others. In this context, people are often treated differently depending on their relative age, rank (titled/untitled, high/low title), income bracket, status and context. In interviews, parents and students repeatedly referred to some teachers treating children differently depending on relative status, rank and material wealth of their parents. In interviews and informal discussions teachers and students often associated low achieving children with aiga faatauva’a - unimportant/lowly/poor families. Several specifically stated that some teachers treated weak children differently because they come from faatauva’a families. Significantly, adults used the adjective vaivai – weak to describe both academic weakness and poverty/low status.

The tendency for many teachers to pay less attention to low achieving students may also link into a belief that the child rather than the teacher is ultimately responsible for his/her achievement. Of 55 references to weak students, 7 ascribed responsibility to the teacher.
Participants suggested that teachers needed to provide weak children with more opportunities (one response), praise and encourage them (two responses), show more interest (four responses) and not hit them (one response). Eight participants ascribed responsibility to parents, citing lack of care, material, academic, and moral support. However, 38 references described the child as primarily responsible for his/her poor performance. Poor performing children were described as faatamala - lacking responsibility (4 responses), taatafa vale - roaming about (5 responses), le faalogo - not listening/attentive (10 responses), le usitai - not obedient (6 responses), le toaga/le tino ulé faamalosi/le finau - not committed/focused/hardworking (12 responses), paie - lazy (5 responses) and le pulea/fai ami - undisciplined (6 responses). As one urban student (Ust3) categorically stated, “A o tamaiti vaivai e le vaivai ona o le faiaoga. E vaivai lava ia ia ia.” (Children who are weak are not weak because of the teacher. They are weak because of themselves [i.e. it’s their own fault].)

The ascription of responsibility to the child is interesting on several accounts. Firstly, in different contexts students, parents, and teachers all acknowledged that teachers differ and readily discussed ‘good’ and ‘bad’ teachers. Yet when probed regarding students’ poor performance, they repeatedly attributed responsibility to the student. One urban student (Ust6) explained this using the biblical quote, “O le fua e te lūti o le fua foi lea e te selesai” (You reap what you sow). I suggest that the tendency to blame the student is consistent with Samoan culture. Samoan culture emphasises the need to show deference and respect towards those in positions of authority. Students consistently laid responsibility on the student (low status), and occasionally suggested that the child and parents shared responsibility. In no instance did a student (low status) suggest that a teacher (high status) was responsible for a student’s poor achievement. To do so would be culturally inappropriate. Only teachers (high status) and a minority of parents (variable status in relation to teachers) suggested that teachers themselves (high status) were responsible for students’ poor achievement.

In this section I have suggested several reasons why some teachers engage less with weaker students. Firstly, there is a perception that the investment of time will make little difference to the outcome and would be better spent on more able students. Secondly, limited opportunities intensify exam stakes, encouraging teachers to make expedient decisions to maximise advantage wherever possible. Thirdly, some teachers perceive low achieving students as faatauvaa or as coming from faatauvaa - low status/poor families and are less motivated to
engage with them. Fourthly, some teachers (and many parents and students) perceive students themselves (i.e. not the teacher) as primarily responsible for students' success or failure.

The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general impact on student motivation

Crooks, Kane and Cohen (1996) suggest that formal exams lead to increased anxiety, lower self-efficacy, decreased intrinsic motivation, and poor peer relations for some younger students. In Samoa, these issues were not clear-cut. Sooaemalelagi (2000) found that all teachers thought exams encouraged learning and that 89% of students stated that they enjoyed sitting exams. In the open-ended survey 40% of teachers suggested that exams discouraged weak students, made them give up trying and/or leave school (QY8T). In interviews several students associated fear and anxiety with exams. Some expressed concern in case they failed. Others expressed concern over their relative position in class.

A fai la 'u suega ou te popole. E tātā lo 'u fatu. A sau le suega ma faigata. Te 'i ua lē pasi. (When I have an exam, I worry. My heart beats. Especially if the exam is hard. In case I don't pass - Rst2.)

Ua mafaufau po o le a lo 'u tulaga e mei i ai. Aumai pepa suega, nao o le tatalo i le Atua e fesoasani mai. Musumsu mai lona agaga paia ia ta ita e fai la ta gabuega e maua ai se tulaga manaia. ([I] think about what position I will shift to. When the exam papers are given out, [I] just pray to God to help me. His holy spirit helps me to do my work and get a good position - Rst1.)

Some teachers noted that the heavy use of English in Year 8 turned weak students off school. One rural teacher (RT3) described English as an aitu - ghost that terrified some children. Students with poor language skills struggled to engage in class and knew that their limited language skills worked against achieving good exam results. As one rural student stated:

A sau loa le Igilisi (pause) ua malosi mea, ua sau upu lapopoa. Io vave ona punou tamaiti. Ua lē ano, aua ua faigata. Ua leai se iși ua faalogo i le faiaoga. ... A fai mai le Igilisi, e tai toa hua tamaiti e sii lima. Ae a sau loa le fesili i le faaSamoa ua sii uma i luga lima o tamaiti. (When it's in English [pause], things [i.e. the words] are hard/difficult, there are big words. The children put their heads down [i.e. turn off]. They don't take any notice because it’s hard. No one listens to the teacher. ... When it’s in English, maybe two children raise their hand. But when the question is in Samoan, nearly all the children put up their hands - Rst4.)

In interviews teachers and parents recognised that different children responded in different ways to poor exam results. Some gave up whilst others resolved to work harder. One town parent (UP2) recognised an inherent unfairness in ranking students by exam results. She noted that, "E lē mua ni vaa uma. E lē sili ni tagata uma. E leai foi se tagata e fia ulivaa" (Not
every boat can come first. Not every person can come top. No person wants to be last/bottom. Some teachers and parents felt that students’ responses to their results depended on the response of significant adults. From their perspective the good parent used poor exam results as an opportunity to urge their children to study harder, whilst the bad parent scolded, physically punished or labelled the student as stupid.

Most students did not describe poor results as discouraging. Rather they felt that poor results led to a resolve to work harder and do better next time. However, the low 2002-2003 transition rate of 87% of students from Year 8 continuing into Year 9 (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture 2003) suggests that some students are discouraged by their results and that they or their families do not see secondary education as a viable option. Students referred to feelings of shame, sometimes embarrassment or anxiety about parents’ reaction and possible punishment when they received poor exam results. Feelings of shame often arose from the public display of results. In reference to a low achieving student a friend stated:

E le manaia ia te ia le faasalalau. Aua e to’a tele le aiga Samoa (pause), tagata e masani ai. E logo ifo, o ia e ulivaa, e (pause). E lagona le ma. E faanoanoa. E musu e toe ui atu i luma o tagata masani aua ua iloa uma e tagata lona tulaga. ... Ua ma i tagata i lona ulivaa. (It’s not good for him [or - in his mind] to announce [the results]. Because Samoan families are big, [pause] people you know. [When they] call out that he is last [pause]. He feels embarrassed/ashamed. He is sad. He is not happy about being seen by people he knows because they all know his place. He is ashamed in front of people because he’s last - Ust4.)

Public display or announcement of results is part and parcel of exams in primary education in Samoa. The potential for shame was seen by students, parents, and teachers as a powerful and positive motivating force. Students and teachers consistently described exams as motivating students and teachers to work harder and achieve better results. Sixty-six percent of teachers (QY8T) stated that if there was no exam, teachers would become less honest and less motivated in their work. Similarly, 40% felt that students would be less motivated (QY8T). In interviews all parents and teachers stated that exams encouraged students to compete and that competition fostered hard work and better results. Good results enhanced status and opened doors to other status-enhancing opportunities. Furthermore, exams and exam results made moral statements about students and their parents. According to participants, results reflected how hard a child worked and in so doing made subtle statements about the child’s nature and personal qualities. These and other ideas are explored in more depth later in this chapter.
The Year 8 National Examination and validity issues

Validity refers to “how well the result really reflects the skills, knowledge, attitude or other quality it was intended to assess” (Flockton 1999: 12). Crooks et al. (1996) give a step-by-step method to ensure validity in an assessment or test. They identify eight stages in the assessment/test process and describe each stage as linked together like a chain. They also propose that the validity of an assessment or test is limited by the weakest link in the chain. If one aspect of the testing process is problematic the overall validity of the assessment/test is threatened. A number of factors threaten the validity of the Year 8 National Examination.

Problems with supervision and leaking

Articles on high stakes assessment at the primary level seldom refer to explicit cheating. However, some acknowledge ‘subtle’ exam-beating tactics like keeping weak students home (Broadfoot and Pollard 2000). The presence of strict procedures and high levels of security surrounding national exams in developed countries indicates an awareness of past and potential problems. In Samoa, despite MESC’s efforts to put in place rigorous procedures, problems with the Year 8 National Examination continue. Two-thirds of surveyed teachers referred to problems with cheating and leaking of exam papers (QY8T). In interviews, almost all parents and teachers referred to leaked exam papers and/or supervisors helping students, allowing extra time or giving students the correct answer. In 2002, MESC attempted to reduce these problems by training Junior Teachers and Head Teachers as supervisors. (In the past Year 8 teachers supervised the exam.) It was hoped that Junior Teachers would have less at stake, be less familiar with the Year 8 syllabus and therefore less likely to assist students.

Teachers frequently referred to leaked papers. They and MESC staff acknowledged that there were tele faitoa - many doors/opportunities for this to occur (i.e. during the writing, typing, reviewing, moderating, editing, printing, binding, packing and distribution of the exam papers). Teachers felt frustrated that their hard work was undermined by cheating, especially when it resulted in some students unfairly gaining access to better schools. Meleisea (2000), Polu (2000) and So’o (2001) refer to high levels of corruption and abuse of power in Samoa. Bray (1998) links exam corruption with the sociological characteristics of small states. Using exam leakage in Mauritius as an example he argues that small states have more intimate social relations and are therefore more prone to security issues.
In Samoa, interview participants frequently stated that being *masani* - knowing someone and *aiga* - related influenced decision making processes and put pressure on people to bypass or ignore established procedures. Students, parents, and to a lesser degree teachers referred to some teachers changing students' results in order to gain personal rewards or favours from certain parents. However, participants felt that these pressures justified the Year 8 National Examination. From their perspective the Year 8 National Examination stood as a just and impartial selection process when compared to other forms of assessment or selection where personal judgement might play a stronger role.

I suggest that leaking, supervision, and cheating problems are directly linked to socio-economic contexts and that the higher the stakes the more likely incidences of dishonesty are to occur. Nabobo (2002) argues that small Pacific Island states are constrained by their relative isolation, limited resource base, small private sector, trade deficits, and heavy economic dependence on external factors. Samoa is a small Pacific nation with two-thirds of the population engaged in a semi-subsistence lifestyle. Unstable agricultural prices, under- and unemployment, a rapidly increasing population (Fairbairn-Dunlop and Associates 1998), limited private and public sector opportunities, and growing social and economical disparity (Fairbairn-Dunlop and Associates 1998; Meleisea 2000; Asian Development Bank 2000) translate to limited tertiary and post school opportunities. In this context success in external exams is critical. Thus the high stakes nature of external exams in Samoa encourages individuals to act in unprofessional ways to maximalise advantage for their students, themselves, their school, community or significant others.

Exams also provide an avenue for status advancement for students, their families, teachers, and schools. One rural teacher explained ongoing leaking and supervision problems as follows:

_"Ou te iloa e ala ona tupu i isi aoga, o le fia manu lea (pause), o le mea sa talatalanoa i ai muamua, ‘O le vaaiga faatagata.’ E manu sona viiga. (I know why it happens in some schools. It's wanting [pause], the thing we talked about before. 'To be a somebody/to be noticed by others.' To be praised/talked about - RT6.)"

_Pencil and paper exams (like the Year 8 National Examination) are not valid forms of assessment_

Critics of high stakes assessment point out that formal pencil and paper type exams and tests do not adequately assess important aspects of learning like attitudes, values, higher order
thinking, learning skills and processes (Gipps 1994; Irving 1998). From their perspective, results do not give a valid representation of students’ ability in a given subject area. In England, primary teachers commented on the inability of formal exams to adequately represent what a child knows and can do and noted significant differences between teachers’ class-based assessments and national exam results (Brown, McCallum et al. 1997).

In Samoa, no interviewed parent or teacher criticised the Year 8 National Examination on the grounds that it failed to assess values, attitudes, learning skills, and processes. However, several key MESC staff (Edex4 and Edex5) recognised that pencil and paper type tests do not capture the child as a whole person and failed to take into account individual differences, attitudes, values, and skills. Furthermore, they felt that the non-inclusion of these areas in the Year 8 National Examination led to a devaluing of the ‘whole person’ and broader educational objectives in the classroom.

*Language, validity, the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general*

Assessment is mediated by language (Olmedo 1981; O’Conner 1989; Cline 1993; LaCelle-Peterson 2000). A student’s performance directly depends on the student’s ability to interpret verbal or written instructions and produce a response. In the Year 8 National Examination Maths, Science, and Social Studies papers are presented and answered in English. The level of language difficulty within each paper and the language ability of students directly impact on their performance.

Although students, parents, and teachers saw a relationship between English language skills and exam performance, they did not query the validity or fairness of students’ results. By contrast, various MESC staff, teacher educators and researchers (Lameta 1998; Male and Lameta 1999; Lee-Hang 2003; Sooaemalelagi 2004) argue that the Year 8 and other exam/test results in Samoa do not give a valid or fair representation of what students know or can do. In Year 8 classrooms, I observed numerous instances where students knew the subject content but lacked English skills to interpret questions and select or generate a correct response. When translated into Samoan, students often responded quickly and accurately.

In 2002, the Year 8 Social Studies and Science papers involved large amounts of reading (14 and 18 pages respectively). The papers also included numerous scientific terms (e.g. photosynthesis, condensation, precipitation, vaporisation, evaporation, condensing, solution,
decomposition, amplitude, convection, radiation, conduction, insulator, apparatus) and challenging general language (e.g. properties [of something], indicated, repel, translucent, opaque, barren, torrid, adopted [taken on], stable etc.). Nation (2001) suggests that written texts should contain 95-98% of familiar language to enable adequate comprehension.

Fieldwork did not include formal assessment of students’ reading comprehension of exam papers. However, informal interactions with students reviewing past exam papers showed that few rural or B and C stream urban students read at this level. In a recent study, Sooaemalelagi (2004) gave 425 students a Year 8 Science paper. Half sat the paper in English and half in Samoan. The test language had minimal impact on top students’ scores, significant impact for average students (students performed better in Samoan) and less impact for low achievers.

Cummins (1984) proposed a two-dimensional model of language proficiency. In this model, language proficiency is influenced by two intersecting variables.

![Diagram of two-dimensional model of language proficiency](cummins_1984.png)

**Figure 4: Two-dimensional model of language proficiency (Cummins 1984)**

Students in the lower left quadrant are grouped as having Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). These students function well when language is context embedded (eg. everyday situations) and cognitively undemanding (using lower level thinking skills). Students in immersion education programmes (i.e. where all instruction is in the ‘new’ language) generally take two to three years to reach this stage. Students in the upper right corner have reached a stage of Cognitive and Academic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP). These students can perform on a par with first-language speakers with context-reduced (i.e. abstract-hypothetical material as in an exam) and cognitively challenging material. They are able to cope with higher order cognitive processes like synthesis, analysis, making
comparisons, evaluating, and interpreting. Cummins suggests that it takes five to seven years of quality immersion education to reach this stage.

_Fairness, social justice, Year 8 National Examination and exam culture_

Fairness in exams is about whether all students have an equal opportunity to achieve good results. Few adult participants suggested that the Year 8 National Examination was unfair. However, teachers and parents recognised that certain groups of students were more likely to do well. Students, parents, and teachers associated exam success with good English. In reference to a classmate one rural student stated:

 _Tusa (pause) sa i Niu Sila, Sau (pause) lelei lana faapalagi. ... A fai le suega, e tusi ana mea. E tele ana togi. A fai le laugatogi, ua sili loa le tagata na. Fai loa ma faaloga._ (Like [pause] she was in New Zealand [pause] her English is good. ... When there is an exam, she writes. She gets lots of marks. When they have the prize giving, that person is top. Immediately gets a prize - Rst3.)

Good English was often associated with financially advantaged parents, living in Apia, attending school in Apia, having better resources and teachers in Apia, having educated parents, and access to libraries, videos, television, and travel. These responses were balanced with a strong belief that if a student was _toaga_ - conscientious/hardworking they would succeed no matter what the circumstances.

Some participants linked student performance in the Year 8 National Examination to which school students attended. Private schools, schools in the Malifa compound, and schools around Apia were perceived by most parents as providing a better education, having better teachers, better English programmes and better resources (Moli 1993; Pereira 2002b). This belief was confirmed by consistently higher Year 8 National Examination results and led to many village children travelling considerable distances to attend town schools or reside in Apia with relations. Location was compounded by cross-cutting social and economic factors in that Apia students were more likely to come from higher income, well-educated, well resourced, and bilingual families (Moli 1993; Lameta 1998).

One teacher and several MESC staff expressed the belief that the Year 8 National Examination functions to maintain a cross section of the population in a privileged position. They noted that children from English speaking or bilingual homes, those with educated parents, those who could afford private education or tutoring were more likely to do well in
the exam, and therefore get into a ‘good’ secondary school. Hence the Year 8 National Examination entrenched and deepened existing social inequalities. This observation is consistent with overseas research. In Australia, Meadmore (2001) concludes that standardised tests and social justice are mutually exclusive. Similarly, educationalists in the United States found that formal tests do not reduce the educational gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Rather, formal exams led to greater educational, social, and racial disparity (Cassie 2000).

**Colonial imposition or a ‘good’ fit**

Educated Samoans often describe the Year 8 National Examination and the prevailing exam culture as a colonial remnant (Moli 1993; Tavana 1994; Lameta 1998; Sanerevi 1998; Afamasaga 1999). This description fails to explain why the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general remain central to primary education 40 years after independence, why exams are found in other contexts (e.g. pastor schools and pre-schools) and why many Samoans have resisted and continue to resist efforts to remove them. Furthermore, it ascribes power and authority to former colonial powers and denies the agency of local populations.

Crick (1997a) notes that the tendency to describe colonisation in the Pacific as an imposition is often not historically grounded. Referring to missionary records, he suggests that colonial influences were often uneven, contested, involved two-way negotiations and appropriations, and were sometimes minimal in impact. Like Sahlins (2000), he rejects the idea of Pacific Islanders as passive recipients and suggests, “in some cases, what occurred looks more like a case of other cultures appropriating what they wanted from Europe” (Crick 1997: 82). Angus criticises social scientists’ tendency to describe agency only as resistance. He argues that agency is frequently an “exercise of engagement in discourses and structures in ways that may reinforce them as well as challenge them” (Angus 2004: 40).

Samoans were not passive recipients of imposed cultural forms (Fairbaim-Dunlop 1991; Meleisea 1992; Kruse Va’ai 1998). Rather their responses were multiple and varied. At times, Samoans strongly resisted colonial initiatives (e.g. withholding taxes, non-cooperation with the New Zealand administration, and withdrawal of children from school during the Mau movement in the 1920s and 1930s). At other times, Samoans eagerly embraced new cultural
forms such as Christianity, literacy, formal education and modern commerce (O’Meara 1990). The process was often one of ambivalence, negotiation and agency that resulted in culturally hybrid forms, practices, beliefs and understandings (Kruse Va’ai 1998).

The history of education in Samoa was not merely one of colonial imposition. Early missionaries were overwhelmed by Samoans’ eagerness to gain reading and writing skills. Locally trained Samoan pastors quickly became both spiritual leaders and teachers. Through the 19th century and until the 1940s primary education remained largely in the hands of locally trained Samoan pastors (Barrington 1968). Beeby and Renyard’s (1945) damning report accused the New Zealand administration of neglecting primary education and laments its narrow teacher-centred pedagogy and exam focus. Barrington (1968) documents the New Zealand administration’s resistance to selective exams and the administration’s despair over the elitist education system. Barrington saw these as driven by the local population and suggested that traditional structures and values worked against egalitarian concepts in education. He also linked both phenomena to the rapidly increasing population, struggling economy, and limited opportunities for paid employment.

There are strong parallels between exams in Samoa and Kruse Va’ai’s (1998) discussion on cultural hybridity. With exams, aspects of Western cultural forms (e.g. the formal structure of exams) are taken and interwoven into aspects of faaSamoan. From this process new cultural forms emerge. The interweaving exists on many levels, from superficial and readily observable practices to profoundly different ways of thinking about learning, teaching, knowledge, and the role of teachers and students within formal education. Faasamoan – the Samoan way found numerous forms of expression during the Year 8 National Examination week. Students arrived at Folau School at least an hour before the exam, armed with pencils, rubbers, rulers, and food contributions. Rst5 recounted how she had woken at dawn for family prayers and how her parents had prayed to God to bless and assist her in her exams. She then bathed, put on a freshly washed and ironed uniform and shared a specially prepared breakfast.

In one classroom, Year 8 students’ names and allocated food items were written on the blackboard. One student was assigned a three pound tin of pisupo - corned beef, faalifu – staple foods like taro, banana, yam etc. cooked in coconut cream, falai moa - fried chicken and chowmein. Other students’ lists varied slightly. Teachers and several Year 6 students bustled about organising breakfast for visiting supervisors and the Examination Unit official.
The guests were seated in the principal’s office. Folau teachers and three students served the visitors a breakfast of sweet coffee, egg and corned beef sandwiches, buttered crackers and slices of pawpaw. The Examination Unit official (scrutiniser) sat beside a locked box containing the examination papers. After the visitors had eaten, Folau teachers ate, followed by the student helpers. As a guest, I was invited to eat with the visiting supervisors.

At 8.20 the Infant Mistress (acting in lieu of the Year 8 teacher/principal who was supervising exams at another school) gathered the students into an empty classroom, checked that they had all the necessary equipment (pencils, rubbers etc.) and that they had eaten. A messenger went to get food for one boy. The Infant Mistress then began a long lotu - devotion. The students sang several verses of a hymn. The teacher then asked them to hold hands and began a long prayer, thanking God for his many blessings, and asking him to assist the students in their exam. By the end of the prayer many of the students were crying. She then sat the students down and spent several minutes giving them practical advice and words of encouragement.

After the exam the Year 8 students dispersed to their homes. Folau School then hosted a lavish lunch for the visitors. As per custom the meal began with grace and visitors ate first. Year 6 students hovered nearby to refill glasses, fan flies away from the food and bring bowls of water to wash the guests’ hands after the meal. Finally, speeches which vacillated between formal language, humour, and everyday speech were exchanged and the visitors presented with ato taitai - food baskets, containing a three pound tin of corned beef, umu - baked taro and faalifu - baked taro leaves in coconut cream.

Alternative perspectives

In this section, I explore alternative perspectives as to why the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general continue to be central to primary education and widely supported. Under the heading, Official functions versus hidden agendas: the Year 8 National Examination in Samoa, I contrast different perspectives on the function, impact and role of the exam. I then suggest that exams are entrenched in primary education because: a) ‘exam culture’ is consistent with other aspects of school pedagogy; and b) the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general have a high level of cultural appeal and cultural fit.
Official functions versus hidden agendas: the Year 8 National Examination

The official purpose of the Year 8 National Examination is threefold: certification, selection and monitoring of student achievement in different curriculum areas (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Coxon 1996; Government of Western Samoa 2000). This closely correlates with perceptions of students, parents and teachers. In the teacher questionnaire (QY8T), 13 of 15 teachers stated that the exam provided tangible information and affirmation (i.e. certification) of student achievement and eleven believed that it provided feedback on the quality of teaching.

Two thirds of questionnaire respondents identified selection to a quality secondary school as important. In interviews, all students, parents, and teachers referred to selection. Rural participants fervently wished to retain the exam.

E le manaia (pe a taofi). Ou te talitonu foi ailoga e toe toatele tamaiti e oo i le Year Eight. O tamaiti i le Year Six poo le Year Seven (pause), e munusu tamaiti. E o e tafafoa, aua ua leai se suega. Ua leai se hope. La e look forward e agai i le Year Nine i Apia. (It’s not good to stop the exam. I also believe that not many children will stay [at school] until Year 8. Year 6 and 7 children [students] will be unwilling/uninterested. They will just muck/roam about because there’s no exam. There’s no hope [future]. They look forward to moving on to Year Nine in Apia - RP5.)

Rural parents argued that without the Year 8 exam and the possibility of selection to ‘better’ schools in Apia, students would lose motivation and many would not complete their primary education.

Key MESC staff felt that the Year 8 National Examination served a functional purpose of allocating scarce resources (i.e. placement at Avele, Samoa or Vaipouli Colleges). Petana-Ioka (1994), Lameta (1998) and Male and Lameta (1999) link this to inequitable standards in secondary education in Samoa. Likewise in interviews, students, parents, and teachers consistently described Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) as inferior in terms of resourcing, English programmes, subject choices, and teacher quality. From their perspective entry to prestigious schools ensured access to tertiary education, good employment, reasonable income, status and enhanced quality of life.
All parties (students, parents, teachers, and MESC staff) recognised monitoring of student achievement and certification as important functions of the Year 8 National Examination. However, a minority of parents and teachers referred to hidden agendas. One rural teacher (RT3) argued that selection based on the Year 8 National Examination deepened existing disparities in secondary education. He proposed that by removing the Year 8 National Examination students would be obliged to attend any secondary school and over time secondary schools would become more equitable. I suggest that the Year 8 National Examination also impacts on the relative status of primary schools. Primary schools are judged by the number of students who gain A passes and/or win places in elite colleges. Those who can afford to endeavour to send their children to ‘better’ schools. This has created a drift into town and caused extreme overcrowding in some Apia schools. It has also contributed to an exponential growth in private education.

Several participants (Edex3; RT3) suggested that privileged members of society prefer to retain the Year 8 National Examination because the present system advantages them and their families. From their perspective, politicians and key decision makers have two agendas: firstly, to ensure that their children keep their advantaged position in society and secondly, to ensure that rural populations remain marginalised and disempowered. Marginalisation and disempowerment are achieved by offering an inferior education to the bulk of the population and discouraging critical thinking. It is interesting to note here the contrasting beliefs between those who see the exam as a dispassionate and fair selection system and those who see it as a tool for the maintenance of social injustice. Several others recognised that the exam contributed to social inequality. However, they did not see this as a result of conscious intent.

Male and Lameta (1999) suggest that the Year 8 National Examination reflects and contributes towards social disparities in the wider society. Children from English speaking or bilingual, economically advantaged, well travelled, and educated homes are more likely to attend ‘good’ primary schools, do better in the exam (Lameta 1998; Lameta 2000; Sooaemalelagi 2004), and gain access to elite secondary schools with better teachers and resources. Consequently, these students are more likely to gain tertiary qualifications, obtain better jobs, and higher incomes. In this way the exam serves to entrench existing disparities between rich and poor, urban and rural, educated and uneducated. As such the Year 8 National Examination (and other national exams) acts as gateways influencing the transmission of social, cultural and economic capital. A guise of objectivity and fairness...
(Broadfoot and Pollard 2000) hides a more subtle role of ‘legitimation’ of social inequalities (Bourdieu 1986).

'Exam culture' is consistent with other aspects of school pedagogy

Pencil and paper based exams are consistent with a teacher-centred pedagogy, a narrow and tightly structured curriculum, and an educational context where resources are limited. In Samoa, teachers follow a detailed and prescriptive syllabus in each of the five core curriculum areas. In practice, this means that most students in most schools in a given week and level, cover almost the same lesson content. Few teachers extend the curriculum beyond these and PEMP resources.

In these circumstances, teachers become the main source of authority and knowledge, and inquiry and critical thinking are discouraged. Despite teacher in-service programmes promoting alternative methods, classroom practice continues to be teacher centred (Esera 1996; Lake 2001; Pereira 2002a). Teaching is generally conducted from the blackboard and directed at the class as a whole. There is a heavy focus on content coverage, and rote learning. Students participate in whole-class chanting and group repetition of responses. Pencil and paper short answer and multiple choice exams fit well in these contexts. This kind of assessment focuses on recall of content rather than critical thinking and demonstration of understanding.

In formal exams in Samoa, students reproduce knowledge imparted by the high status, authority figure of the teacher. This is consistent with wider cultural practices where children show respect to elders by showing “unquestioning acceptance of their opinions and viewpoints” (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1981: 37). In this context knowledge is transmitted rather than discovered. Content knowledge is assumed to be fixed, non-contestable and readily measurable. These assumptions are consistent with pencil and paper, multiple choice and short answer examinations, which primarily require students to recall content.

One urban parent (UP4) described exams as an opportunity to “toe fafaga mai lou mafauau i au aoga sa fa'i” (re-feed your mind on what you have studied). Several parents used the word ala suggesting that preparation for exams and the exam itself re-awoke children’s minds, and enabled them to bring to the surface things that they had previously learnt. For one rural parent, exams were an opportunity to:
In each case the imagery of feeding the mind, putting something in one's mind, and reawakening the mind to recall past learning, suggest a perception of knowledge as something tangible, something that is transferable, and something that at a later point in time can be retrieved intact for an exam or test.

Bernstein posits that behind every pedagogical act (i.e. formal testing) there is a theory of learning. As already mentioned, Bernstein identifies two broad types of pedagogy; namely visible and invisible (Bernstein 1975; Bernstein 1996). Bernstein describes each and explores their underlying beliefs, assumptions, and understandings. Education in Samoa closely aligns with visible pedagogy, where approaches to teaching and learning are teacher-centred. High status adults determine how time and space are allocated, relationships are hierarchical, rules explicit, and social and physical boundaries clearly demarcated. The teacher is the authority figure who imparts knowledge to the child as learner. Evaluation in this context involves recall of knowledge (as imparted by the expert teacher) and grading is explicit (i.e. represented by marks, percentages and ranked position). Bernstein also notes that visible pedagogies are more likely to be found in educational settings that are under-resourced and have narrow curriculums. This description aptly fits Samoa.

The Year 8 National Examination and exams in general have a high level of cultural appeal and fit

In this section I suggest that the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general are valued by the wider public because they have a high level of cultural appeal and are consistent with many Samoan beliefs, ways of viewing the world, and cultural practices. I challenge the common characterisation of Samoans as non-competitive. Instead I suggest that exams provide culturally endorsed contexts for competition and public display. Competition, public display of results (i.e. public scrutiny of performance), and the possibility of being shamed are powerful motivators in determining what people do and how they do it.
Why locals value the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general

Whilst a small but increasing number of educated Samoans call for a review of the Year 8 National Examination and the introduction of alternative forms of assessment, the wider public generally sees the Year 8 National Examination as a just and fair selection process and believes that tests and exams encourage better teaching and learning. In a survey of Year 8 students, all students stated that exams encouraged learning (Sooaemalelagi 1999). Year 8 teachers (QY8T) too, readily identified numerous ‘good things’ about the Year 8 National Exam. For teachers the exam benefited them in that it:

- gave feedback on what students knew 9/15
- gave feedback on the quality of teaching 11/15
- made sure that teachers worked hard, did their job honestly and covered all the syllabus 11/15
- challenged teachers to compete with other schools 4/15

From their perspective the exam also had ‘good’ outcomes for students in that it:

- encouraged students to compete against each other 7/15
- encouraged students to learn their work 10/15
- encouraged good work habits and discipline 9/15
- provided information on and affirmation of achievement (i.e. Year Eight Certificate) 13/15

In interviews with students, parents and teachers, I explored these ideas further. All groups believed that exams pushed students. Without exams students, parents and teachers believed that a child’s natural inclination towards laziness and personal indulgence would emerge and take control. In interviews they stated:

_E lelei le fai pea. ... O le isitamaititi e fiapea. ‘Ou te le ano i mea aoga, aua e leai se suega. E leai se tauta.’” (It’s good to continue [with exams]. ... Some children will think, ‘I won’t bother about school work because there is no exam.’ There’s nothing to fight/compete for - RT1.)_

_Aua o suega (pause), e naunau ai tamaiti e fai latou mea aoga. E filiga foi. (Because exams [pause], are the reason that children care about their school work. They persevere - RP6.)_

_O le mea leaga pe a tupu (pause), pe a leai ni suega. O le a fiafia tamaiti. Fiapea, ‘O matou e free (pause) e leai ni suega.’ Pei nao o le alu atu. E le a’o mea aoga. Ae a fai suega (pause) e lelei pe a fai suega. ... Ae afae e leai se suega o lona uiga e alu atu le tamaititi, tiai api, tafao. (It would be a bad thing_
if it happened [pause] - if there were no exams. Children would be happy. Like, 'We are free [pause] there's no exam.' We'd just go [to school]. [We] wouldn't learn our schoolwork. But if there are exams [pause] - it's good to have exams. If there are no exams a child will just go [to school], throw away their exercise books [and] muck about - Rst1).

Each of these excerpts implies a certain perception about the nature of children. Without the exam, children would be wayward, unmotivated in their work, muck about, and be unruly. "E paie, e malosi le alu o le masafau i isi mea ae le alu i le aoga" ([They'd] be lazy, their mind will be distracted by other things [implication - bad things] but not on their schoolwork - RP3). Such a perspective is consistent with Shore's analysis of how Samoans perceive human nature. Shore contrasts amio - natural impulses and aga - "culturally derived aspects of behaviour" (Shore 1982: 167). Fairbairn-Dunlop elaborates stating that "Samoan actions are conceptualised as predominantly governed by amio (selfish, potentially disruptive impulses). Individuals will not act 'well' from choice or from freedom of will. So there is a need for society to have many rules and impose strict laws to help control the amio and direct people's behaviour into socially acceptable channels" (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991: 220). The public scrutiny of exam results and the potential to be shamed, work as powerful mechanisms that ensure that children's amio (inclination towards laziness, mucking about, caring only about themselves) is held in check.

Parents and teachers strongly asserted that if there was no exam teachers too would not work as hard. One rural teacher believed that without a Year 8 National Examination some teachers would be fiafia - happy because "E leai se galuuga tele e fai. Ae o le a le fai a tiute a faaoga i tamaiti. E le faamaoni" (They won't do a lot of work. They won't fulfil their duty to the children - won’t be honest [in their work] - RT2). Likewise one rural parent believed that with no exam and no end of the year results:

E le popole foi le faaoga ia. Pe faamaoni pe le faamaoni. E le popole i ai pe a lelei le faiga o lona teaching. Aua o lea ua le fai a ni suegea. Aua e pei o le mea lena e filiga ai le faaoga. (The teacher won’t worry too. To be honest/conscientious or not honest/conscientious [in their work]. [The teacher] won’t worry whether they teach well. Because now there is no exam. Because that’s the thing [i.e. the Year 8 National Examination] that makes the teacher persevere/work hard - RP5.)

Participants' comments are consistent with research that describes Samoa as a culture where there are high levels of public scrutiny and actions are motivated by a sense of audience, public judgement, and the potential to be shamed (Shore 1982; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; 263)
Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Mageo 1998; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000). In the case of the Year 8 National Examination, teachers are largely judged by students’ results and this pushes teachers to work harder. One rural teacher compared the exam to a *taitai* - leader who stands with a *salu* – broom in his hand overlooking a group of young people doing a task.

*A tu se taitai o se galuega ma le sasa, o lea (pause), o le a galulue uma ona o le jefefe i le sasa lea.* (If the leader of a job supervises with the stick [broom] then (pause), everyone works because they are afraid of being hit – RT3.)

For this teacher the Year 8 National Examination acted as a *salu* – broom, pushing students and teachers to work hard and creating fear least they are shamed by poor results.

Several teachers disputed this position. One argued that teachers would continue to work hard for as long as Head Teachers and School Review Officers (SRO) did their job properly. In this instance, public display of results is removed, but external scrutiny remains in the form of Head Teachers, inspectors (SRO), and ultimately God who sees and knows each person, their thoughts and actions. According to one rural teacher:

*A o le tele o faiaga, a le ‘forciga’ e le ulu aoga e le faamaoni. Ae o le faiaga faamaoni lava ia, e le vaai i le ulu aoga, ae e vaai i le Atua. Ai o le Atua e ‘judgiga’ ia. ... Ae o ist faiaga, a le vaai atu le ulu aoga, e moemoe a ia. E le kea.* (There are many teachers, who wouldn’t be honest if the Head Teacher didn’t force them to. But the honest teacher does not think about the Head Teacher, but thinks about God. Because God judges him. ... But for some teachers if the Head Teacher doesn’t keep an eye on them, they just sleep. They don’t care – RT4.)

Such a teacher is described in the saying ‘*O le va’aiga faale tagata,*’ meaning that only when a person is watching will they be motivated to work. Without the external audience, “*E pepelo foi le mea la e fai. E fiafia. E lei se galuega e auilo ai se isi. E pule lava ia.*” (It’s just a bluff/lies/false what he/she is doing. [He/She] is happy. [Because] no one is looking at what he/she is doing. It would be up to them [to do what they liked] - UT2.)

High levels of external scrutiny are common to primary schools in Samoa. Head Teachers require staff to hand completed weekly plans to them. Fines are often imposed when late. Several teachers stated, “*A leia, o lona uiga e leai se mea o faia*” (If it isn’t done [i.e. handed in], then nothing will be done [i.e. the weekly plan won’t be written up] - RT1). One teacher responded to the proposition that the Head Teacher discontinued checking weekly plans with laughter:
In fieldwork schools, head Teachers visit some or all classrooms several times per week to check that teachers have prepared for the day and that class programmes are consistent with weekly plans. MESC inspectors (SRO) in turn check the work of both head teachers and teachers. Parents and almost all teachers believed that without external checks (e.g. handing in Weekly Plans to the head teacher, the head teacher regularly circling classrooms, SRO visits) teachers would not be honest in their work. When I queried why some teachers did not mark books of some students or carry out planned lessons, respondents frequently placed responsibility on the head teacher or SRO for not checking the teacher's work. Hence blame lay not with the teacher (lower status) who failed to carry out an expected task but with those in positions of authority (high status) who failed to monitor their work.

Several teachers argued that whilst other teachers might become slack, they would not change how they went about their work. From their perspective, the ultimate judge was God – who saw and knew each person's thoughts and actions. Again, the idea of scrutiny continues. However, in the final example, the audience is God rather than a person's colleagues, parents and community. The ascription of a moral stance or action to oneself whilst doubting the motives of others was noted by Poasa et al. (2000). Such a position is consistent with cultures with high levels of external scrutiny. In this context, one can only feel sure that other will behave in certain ways if they can be observed. In the case of the Year 8 National Examination, a teacher's work is indirectly observed through the results of his or her students.

In this study, parents and teachers made repeated links between the Year 8 National Examination, exams in general, and competition. Whereas, Pacific and non-Pacific researchers frequently describe Pacific learners as cooperative in orientation (Moli 1993; Field 1996; Nabobo 1998; Dickie 2000; Coxon et al. 2002), interview responses and classroom observations suggest a much more complex picture. In some contexts students displayed high levels of cooperation (e.g. sharing of resources), whilst in other contexts students verbally and physically competed for advantage (e.g. position in line, group
leadership roles, first turn, etc.). In Samoa, exams have become a culturally endorsed area where students, their families, teachers, schools, and villages compete for limited opportunities (i.e. placement in ‘good’ schools) and prestige. Students, parents, and teachers strongly believed that exams encouraged students to compete against each other and that competition pushed students to work harder, learn more, and get better results.

Tutusa o se luitau mo tamaiti. la tauva (pause) e compete mo se tulaga. Pei o le sili lea - e tauva ai tamaiti. Pei o se competition mo tamaiti uma. E manaia. E tino u tamaiti. E tooaga e fai meaonga. (It's like a challenge for the children. To compete [pause], compete for a position. Like the first place - the children compete for [it]. It's like a competition for all the children. It's good. The children really work hard. Are conscientious about their schoolwork - UP3.)

High-stakes exams produce clear and apparently objective results in the form of marks, percentages, and relative ranking. Exam results lend themselves to public display and foster competition. Within primary schools, exam results are made public in multiple ways. Teachers read out students' scores and place in class, results are displayed on walls, and students usually sit according to their position in recent exams. At the annual prizegiving ceremony, schools announce students' positions in class. Students' marks, percentages, grades and rank are also recorded in their reports. The public display of exam results is consistent with other aspects of Samoan culture. Family contributions to church and faalavelave - valued cultural activities are often read out. Likewise the results of plantation, village and household inspections are publicly announced in village fono - matai meetings and komiti fafine - women’s committee meetings (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). Underlying the public display of results is a strong belief that without the public audience and the associated potential for shame and/or status enhancement, people would not be motivated to act in certain ways.

Competition is closely linked in parents' and teachers' minds to the idea of public audience. Almost all participants believed that it was good to announce students' results at annual prizegiving ceremonies. In rural contexts, students, parents and teachers described these events as village highlights:

_I le faalau atu (tulaga)? O le mea na o le laugatogi. O le fiafia o matua (strong emphasis). _... A oo i le aso e tumu i nei i matua. E oo foi i le verandah atoa. E tumu uma. O mai (pause). O matua, o latou tei, o tagata uma o le nuu e o mai i nei. E fai le lotu. Ia e fiafia e faalogo. Ua lau mai, sili i le Samoan, sili i le Maths, sili i le total. E ese lana prize ua maua. O ai ua Dux i le Year 8. E fiafia uma matua i mea la e fai. A leai se laugatogi e fai, e le fiafia matua. E feta. Pe o le a le mea ua le faia ai. E manaio lava latou e fai. (The public announcement [of results]? That's the prize giving. Parents think it's great [strong emphasis].) _... When it reaches that day the place is filled with parents, even the verandah._

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Everywhere is packed. [Everyone] comes [pause]. Parents, their brothers, sisters, cousins. All the people in the village. They do a lotu [devotion/service]. [Everyone] is happy to listen. They read out, top in Samoan, top in Maths, top overall. Each has a different prize. Who is Dux of Year 8. All the parents like what is being done. If there was no prize giving parents would not be happy. They’d be angry. They’d want to know why not. They still want to do it - RP5.)

Mageo (1998) describes competitive contexts in Samoa as informal cultural projects, meaning contexts where those aspects of oneself that are often disapproved and denied find socially accepted spaces. Within these contexts, competition flourishes. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) links competition to the fluid nature of matai ranking. She suggests that this leads to a constant vying for status, status anxiety, and acts an important source of motivation. Fairbairn-Dunlop notes that people commit enormous energy and resources to maintain and raise family prestige.

Competition is central to the Samoan way of life and found in a range of contexts (Shore 1982; Howard 1986; O’Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1991; Mageo 1998; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000). At funerals, church openings, title bestowals and fundraising activities, families endeavour to enhance their status and display their generosity through the size of their contribution. Competition, status enhancing activities, relationship building, public display, and a sense of external scrutiny are closely interlinked. The relationship between these is well illustrated in church donations. In Samoa 34.8% of the population belong to the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa (Statistical Services Division Government of Samoa 2001). In this church the family name and amount given to both the minister and the church is announced to the congregation. O’Meara (1990) argues that this practice serves three purposes. Firstly, it encourages people to give more (i.e. people compete in order to enhance their or their extended family’s status). Secondly, it recognises generosity (i.e. through public announcement) and thirdly, it reduces the likelihood of inappropriate use of money (i.e. public scrutiny is achieved through the announcement of donations). In the same way, the Year 8 National Examination encourages students to work harder. Secondly, exams recognise students’ achievement in a public context (i.e. through public display of the results). Lastly, exams are perceived as reducing the likelihood of personal bias in selection processes.

In interviews, all groups identified selection to elite colleges as the primary function of the Year 8 National Examination. Students and parents and many teachers saw the exam as a
transparent, fair and objective means to allocate limited places. From their perspective, every child, urban or rural, rich or poor, full Samoan or half-caste, had the opportunity to sit the exam and therefore the possibility of entering an ‘good’ college. They feared that removal of the exam would create a situation where being *masani* - having connections and having money to buy favours would become the new criteria for selection. As stated earlier, this observation is consistent with Baba and Coxon (1997) who note that in Pacific states people in positions of authority often struggle to be impartial. Extensive family networks and cultural values which emphasise reciprocity and embeddedness in relationships make it difficult to act in impartial ways (Baba and Coxon 1997; Hooper 2000; James 2000; Meleisea 2000).

In interviews a number of town and rural parents talked about the Year 8 National Examination as an objective mechanism for allocating places in secondary schools. From their perspective the exam was an externally monitored, tightly scrutinised mechanism which provided a solution to human fallibility. A significant number of parents talked with ambivalence about the Samoan disposition and culture. Students and teachers saw some teachers as *pio* - crooked, *le fa'i sa'a'o* - not likely to do things properly, or *faaauau/faqapito* - biased or showing favour. Specifically, they referred to some teachers changing results in order to appease family or friends, gain favours or more frequently get a material reward.

*Faapea le faiaoga, o le tamaititi lea e tele tupe. 'E maua la'u ula ma la'u meaalofa.' Ia, ua faasil. E le faamaoni. E aafia tamaiti (The teacher thinks this student [i.e. student’s family] has lots of money. ‘I’ll get an ula [garland] and present.’ So they put the child in first place. It’s not honest. The children are affected - RT2.)*

*O faiaoga e eseese uiga. A masani isi faiaoga i matua o se tamaititi (pause). Ia (pause), o le mea pe ua oo i results, e faasili le tamaititi. Ae e le o le mea tatau. E tupu soo i inei i Samoa faiaoga faapena (refers again to teachers who are masani - connected to others). Pe tele foi fafaga, pe ua manaia foi le fafaga. (Teachers are different. When some teachers know the parents of a child (pause). Yes (pause), the thing - when it gets to results, the child is top. But it is not proper [fair]. It happens all the time in Samoa with teachers like that [reference to being masani]. Or when [they bring] lots of food [for the teachers] and the food is beautiful too - RT4.)*

*Ioe e tele le faaauau. E tupu tele le mea lena. E maua fua mea o le au masani. E le ave i tagata i le iloa [fatamaj], ae ave i tagata i le masani (pause), aiga. (Yes, there’s lots of bias/favouritism. It happens all the time. People who know people get things for nothing. People don’t get opportunities from what they know but from who they know (pause), family - RT2.)*
Despite the recognition that the Year 8 National Examination suffered from leakage and supervision problems, it was still seen as a superior option to having no exam. From parents' and most teachers' perspective the Year 8 National Examination was impartial. To remove the Year 8 National Examination and introduce alternative forms of assessment created opportunities for personal gain and increased the likelihood that decisions would be based on personal allegiances rather than students’ ability.

Participants often used emotive language when talking about exam results. A student’s result did not reflect on the student in isolation (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Gerber 1985; Utumapu 1992; Mageo 1998; Tuia 1999; Poasa, Mallinckrodt et al. 2000). In Samoa, a child is an extension and intimate part of the family. A child’s results reflect on the child, their parents, extended family, village and school. Exam results are widely distributed, displayed and talked about. Students and parents expressed feeling mimita - proud and fiafia - happy when children did well. Conversely poor results led to feelings of ma/faalumaina - shame/embarrassment for the child and their parents.

A faapea ua sau le tulaga o la’u tama (pause), pe maualalo i le vasega, e faanoanoa ta ita. E te ma. E le fiafia (pause) i le mea na o le faailoa. Tulou. Ae a aumai se tulaga lelei, ia ua fiafia. Ua mimita. Faapea isi tagata ua poto tele le atalii (laughs). Ae a maualalo, faapea tagata aivalea tele la’u tama (laughs). (If my child’s results are low/bottom of the class, I feel sad. Embarrassed. Not happy (pause) about it being announced/made known. Pardon me [excuse what I say]. But if it is a good result, [I] feel proud. People think what a clever son [laughs]. But if [the result] is low people think my son is dumb [laughs] - RP1.)

Students talked about feeling faanoanoa - sad, ma - embarrassed/ashamed and fefe - afraid when they received poor exam results or were placed badly in class. One rural student recounted how his parents did not hit him but verbally admonished him saying, “O mea na e maua e le tamaititi taa. ... Tou te iloa e tai outou ae inosia ai maua o matua” (That’s what happens to children who roam about (i.e. don’t act in a responsible way). ... Do you realise that you [plural] do it but [everyone] feels disdain for us [i.e. your actions reflect badly on us - Rst4]. “Ae o le matua ua lagona e ia – ua ma. Aua ua faahumaina ia” (But the parent feels [is hurt] – is embarrassed. Because they have been shamed - Rst5). In each case the implication is that child and their family feel shame because; a) the child has performed badly, and b) others know the poor result. Furthermore to do badly at school inflicts hurt on parents who are tigaina - struggling, pologa - slaving, and afu - sweating in order to educate their children.

Ua mainau. Ua lusi atoa le taimi sa faaaga ai. Ma tupe na alu ai i le aumaiga i le aoga. ... O le eseeseaga o isi tamaiti. O isi tamaiti e alolofa i o latou matua. [E]
toaaga lava e o i le aoga. E faaoga le tupe o ona matua. (It’s a waste. It’s lost [wasted] all the time schooling [them]. And all the money bringing them to school ... Children are different. Some children love their parents. They are conscientious about going to school. They use their parents’ money [implied-wisely] - UP4.)

Exam results are seen to not only reflect a student’s academic ability but are perceived as moral statements. Parents stated, "E iloagofie le tamaititi la e finau ma toaga e fai mea aoga" (It’s easy to know [from the results] which children really apply themselves and are conscientious with their school work - UP4) and "E iloa ai le fua le taumafai" (You can tell [from the results] how hard [the child] has worked - RP2). Exam results also reflected how well parents had done their job; whether they had guided, instructed, disciplined the child; whether they had raised a child who loved their parents and was committed to their long-term well-being. Exam results stood as public statements about core cultural values and practices of those we are most intimately linked to – namely our children.

A number of parents and students explicitly stated that exam results reflect a child’s love for their parents. Success in exams is a way to “faailoa lou alofa” (show/make known your love - UP5).

O isi tamaiti e alolofa i o latou matua, e toaaga e o i le aoga, e faalogo i le faiaoga, ma usitai, e fai a latou mea aoga. (Some students love their parents, are conscientious about going to school, listen/attend to the teacher, are obedient and do their school work - RP6.)

Children who care about their family try to get good results in order to “Faafiafia lo’u aiga” (Make my family happy - Rst1 and Rst3). The idea that doing well at school indicates a student’s love for their parents reflects a fundamentally different conception of love. Whereas love in Western societies implies intimacy, love in Samoa suggests relations of reciprocity, service to one’s family and generosity.

Children demonstrate love towards their parents and elders by their willingness to care for, serve and obey them. The “[p]erformance of work and service for one’s kin is considered a primary expression of love” (Gerber 1985: 128). By working hard at school and doing well students demonstrated love for their parents and simultaneously positioned themselves so that they could continue to demonstrate their love. Success in exams and access to quality secondary education led to well-paid employment and ultimately enabled children to fulfil the
repeatedly expressed desire to “Sue se galuega e tausi o ‘u matua” (Find a job to look after my parents).

E lelei le faifai pea e maua ai le humanai manuia. E lè gata foi lena (pause), ae o le tausiga o le aiga. E faamoemoe tele ou matua ia te oe ina ia maua se humanai manuia. O fanau e tausia le aiga. E tausi foi matua. (It’s good to keep it [the exam] in order to have a good future. That’s not the only thing (pause), but to look after the family. Your parents greatly depend on you to ensure their future well-being. Children take care of [their] families. [Children] look after [their] parents too - Ust3.)

Students and parents made frequent reference to the idea of reciprocation. All rural students, parents and some urban participants portrayed parents as struggling to meet school fees, making daily sacrifices to feed and clothe their children, constantly guiding and admonishing their children, and offering support in the form of prayer and faamaniaga - blessings as they set off each day to school. When children got good results parents felt proud and happy and believed that their efforts had not been in vain.

Ta te fiafia. Fiafia aua la (pause), ua lelei maka. Lelei tulaga o le aoga. Tulaga (pause) - e te fiafia aua ta te pologa i taeao uma e fai lavalava, e fai mea ai. E tu mai i le aoga (i le laugatogi) e fiafia ta ita. Aua o ta ita e nofo tumau i na mea (feau) i taeao uma, taeao uma. (You feel happy. Happy because [pause] the marks are good. The position in class is good. Position (pause), you are happy because [you] struggle every morning to prepare the clothes [e.g. iron the school uniforms], to make food. When they get a place at school [i.e. top or near the top] you feel happy. Because everyday you face those things [chores], every morning, every morning - RP2.)

Caring and loving students acknowledge their parents’ sacrifice by working hard, being successful at school, (as measured by exam results) and ultimately by finding employment and looking after their parents. Children also reciprocate parental sacrifice by toaga - hardworking/committed, faaalaloalo - respectful, usitai - obedient and faalogo - attentive behaviours at school. In interviews, students and parents strongly associated these behaviours with academic success. Furthermore toaga, faaalaloalo, usitai and faalogo behaviours are socially valued qualities - the way children ought to be. Hence morality (being a good child), love, and success at school were intimately linked in the minds of students, parents and, to a lesser degree, teachers.

Several interesting implications emerge out of these perspectives. Firstly, students, parents, and most teachers assumed that exam results reflect what students know and can do. Few questioned the validity of the Year 8 National Examination. Secondly, students and their
parents tended to see students' results as a direct reflection of their application. They seldom linked students' results to the quality of teacher input or language ability. The student was seen as primarily responsible for his/her success or failure. In some cases responsibility was placed on parents. Both urban and rural parents expressed this view stating, "O le faatamala o matua" (It's [because of] the parents' negligence). The tendency to ascribe blame to the child or parents is interesting in that the same participants in other contexts often referred to disparities between rural and urban schools and differences in the material and social circumstances of families and commented on how these factors affected students' success at school.

Some parents explicitly recognised a link between material circumstances and attitudes towards exams and education. Several students and parents commented that students in New Zealand undervalue education because they have less at stake. Students who fail school still find well-paid employment. Participants also focused on the idea of Samoa as a poor, developing country. To educate your children required enormous sacrifice.

A'o Samoa e mafaufau matua i le malosi pei o tupe, ma le afu. La taunu mo se faainga lelei. Poo le a se tigaina, poo le a le afu, ae a tu lelei, e galo le tiga. ... Ma le tigaina e usu e fai galuega, poo le usu fui i le faatoaga, e sue mai se tupe e totoi ai le pili. ... Ae a taunu i se taunuuga lelei, pei (pause), e leai se mea lena. E le afaina. Ua iu manua le faamoemo. (Here in Samoa the parents think a lot about the money, the sweat. You want a good outcome. If you have a good result, you forget the pain [hard work] and the sweat. ... The hardship of going to work, going to the plantation, getting money to pay the [school] bill. ... If there's a good outcome/result, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. The [your] hopes have been achieved - UP2.)

Academic success, as measured by exam results, was also seen as a way to escape physically demanding and dirty plantation work and sometimes the social obligations of village life (Howell and Philips 1986; Franco 1992; Utumapu 1992; Tavana 1994; Tuia 1999). However, in parents' efforts to ensure their children's academic success there lay a double-edged sword. The well-raised child who survived the rigours of formal exams and found good employment felt alofa – love for their parents and would willingly look after them. Conversely, academic success, employment, and life in Apia might also lead to greater personal freedom, exposure to new values and an unwillingness to take on family and village responsibilities.
Authentic assessment: new forms of colonisation

In Samoa there are contradictions between educational policy and the pervasive exam culture. MESC identifies four policy objectives: equity, quality, relevancy and efficiency (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a; Ministry of Education Sport and Culture 2003). In this chapter I have suggested that exams work against equity and compromise the quality of student learning. Policy documents call for assessment practices that are "just and impartial" and "seek information that will benefit the student" and enable "equitable access throughout the system" (Department of Education 2000: 8) They also call for "the formation of active, interactive and creative pedagogies" that develop "the ability to analyse knowledge critically in a learning environment which encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought" (ibid.: 8). Such pedagogies call for new forms of assessment. The former DOE encouraged teachers to reduce the use of formal pencil and paper type exams (Coxon 1996) and introduce a variety of formative and summative tools to measure and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning (Education Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a). MESC continues to call for assessment practices that identify students’ needs and inform teacher planning and practice.

Over the last decade a range of in-service projects have endeavoured to introduce more authentic forms of assessment. For example, Augmenting Institutions for General Attainment (AIGA) focused on the “development of diagnostic programmes and intervention strategies for learning” (Department of Education 2001: 8), Supporting Teacher Education in Pacific Schools (STEP) looked at the development of ‘authentic’ assessment tasks, PEMP promoted a range of class-based assessments (ibid.) and, more recently, the Primary Teachers In-service Training Programme (PTISTP) encouraged teachers to use more formative types of assessment.161 (Redden, 2002).

Despite the commitment in MESC policies and aid initiatives to introduce new assessment practices, there have been few changes. Indeed, efforts to introduce alternative assessment have frequently met with resistance (Tanielu 1997). During the fieldwork period I did not observe any teacher engaged in alternative forms of assessment (e.g. running records, running records, running records).

161 The term formative assessment refers to assessment that is used by teachers to identify next learning steps.
analysing a sample of students’ work [e.g. a story, handwriting sample or maths activity], one-to-one or small group assessment of a specific task, cross checking against a list of objectives as children work). For students, parents, and teachers assessment in schools meant weekly, monthly, term or bi-annual pencil and paper type tests and/or exams.

It could be argued that efforts to remove the Year 8 National Examination, reduce the use of school-wide formal exams and introduce new forms of assessment represent new forms of colonisation, albeit in a more subtle form of global flows of educational ideas from developed-to-developing countries. Afamasaga notes a loss of “autonomous decision making” and increasing dependency on Australian and New Zealand educational aid creating a situation where “their educational philosophies also become our educational philosophies” (Afamasaga 1999: 6). In Samoa what constitutes good assessment practice is hotly contested. Increasingly senior MESC, FOE staff and tertiary educated parents (generally educated in Pacific Rim institutions and exposed to Western ways of thinking) question the Year 8 National Examination and the heavy use of exams in primary schools and call for alternative forms of assessment. Conflict over what constitutes good assessment erupted in 2003 in the private school sector. Peace Chapel School’s, management, representing the conservative pro-exam voice conflicted with expatriate staff calling for alternative forms of assessment. The conflict escalated resulting in staff expulsions, disaffection in the school community and media attention (Another Advocate of Change 2003).

Underlying MESC and teacher educator calls for more authentic assessment are fundamentally different ways of thinking about what is knowledge, how children acquire knowledge, human nature and the nature of the student/child - teacher/adult relationship. Proponents for change call for more individualised and qualitative approaches to assessment. Bernstein (1996) links these forms of assessment to invisible pedagogies. He describes invisible pedagogies as student-centred, lacking clear boundaries (i.e. personal, spatial, time, and subject boundaries are blurred) and based on implicit control. In this context the teacher is primarily a facilitator and there is greater room for children to express individual agency and spontaneity.

The less restrictive pedagogy provides spaces (literal and metaphorical) for children to explore, discover, and construct their own knowledge(s), reveal themselves and develop individual identities. However, in the process of revealing him/herself the child exposes
him/herself to the scrutinising adult (i.e. teacher). Here Bernstein notes an interesting contradiction. The supposedly liberal form of assessment is potentially more intrusive, lending itself to social control and manipulation. Such assessment involves teachers making judgements about what students know and can do, how they go about their work (processes and skills) and about what they think and feel (attitudes and values). Hence in invisible pedagogies (i.e. liberal mainstream primary education in Western countries) there is even greater potential for exposure and surveillance of the individual child. The public yet superficial assessment of students’ work (i.e. formal exams within visible pedagogies like Samoa) is replaced by a private, revealing, and much more intrusive surveillance of the child as a person, his/her relationships, attitudes, and values.

Calls for authentic assessment require a fundamentally different way of thinking about the relationship between students/children and teachers/adults in classrooms. In Chapter Four, I showed how the more traditional child-adult relationship is typified by filial duty, love, formality and distance. In this context, children orientate around adults, their wishes, needs and interests. Children respect, defer and obey. Authentic assessment turns this relationship upside down. Here the teacher is required to orientate around the child and identify their learning achievements and needs.

Authentic assessment also assumes and depends on children’s willingness to reveal what they know, can do, think and feel to adults. However, socially sanctioned behaviours and behaviours associated with academic success (i.e. filemu - quiet, usitai - obedient, loto maulalo - humble and faaloalo - respectful, faalogo - listening/attentive behaviours) imply an unwillingness to publicly reveal oneself, share one’s thoughts, feelings and knowledge. Finally, advocates of change argue that a student’s results should be confidential to the child and his/her family, children should not be compared with each other and they should be protected from feelings of shame and failure. These ideas reflect Western ideologies that place value on the individual and the protection of his/her feelings and rights. By contrast, Samoan ideologies emphasise the importance of relationships and group (especially family) well-being.
Conclusion: A sociocultural understanding

Authentic and formative assessment requires a blurring of boundaries between child and adult spaces and a shift from relations typified by distance and formality to personal engagement. Authentic assessment requires teachers to focus on the individual child and engage with him/her in order to find out what he/she knows, does not know. Formative assessment involves identification of next teaching steps and using this to inform planning and teaching. As such, authentic and formative assessment requires teachers to reverse established cultural patterns. Such practices require teachers (high status) to engage with, orientate themselves around, and ‘serve’ children (low status). In short it asks teachers to behave in ways that are culturally unfamiliar and inappropriate.

The call for more authentic forms of assessment is also based on fundamentally different perceptions of knowledge and how children learn. In Chapter Three, I suggested that knowledge and meaning are defined and controlled by higher status adults (Duranti 1988). Teachers (high status) hold knowledge that they impart to children (low status). In Samoa formal exams are generally multiple choice or short answer. The student does not have the opportunity to construct his/her own response (as per constructivist theory of learning). Rather, multiple choice and short answer questions require students to recall content as imparted by the higher authority/status teacher. Thus students’ responses (if correct) re-affirm the knowledge and authority of the high status adult.

Few students and parents in Samoa question the validity and fairness of the Year 8 National Examination and the entrenched exam culture in primary education. Similarly in Western countries the wider public tends to see exams as a fair and objective way to assess students and school performance and fails to recognise serious validity issues (Broadfoot and Pollard 2000; Madaus and Horn 2000). In Samoa, a small but increasing number of educators feel that the Year 8 National Examination raises significant social justice and fairness issues and negatively impacts on teaching and learning. A small number of educators also expressed concern about the validity of the examination process and results. However, other MESC staff and teachers felt that despite its shortcomings the Year 8 exam served a short-term purpose of selection for secondary education.
In the past researchers have tended to see exams as externally imposed remnants of a colonial past. This perspective does not explain why exams were adopted with such enthusiasm and why they remain firmly entrenched at all levels of primary education. In this chapter I have suggested that the Year 8 National Examination and exams in general are valued by locals because ‘exam culture’ and exam related practices have a high level of pedagogical and cultural fit and appeal. In this chapter I have extensively used interview material to give voice to local perspectives on exams and illustrate how exams fit and complement aspects of faaSamoan ways of thinking, doing and being.

I suggest that a complex interplay of cultural, social, historical, material and political forces have contributed to the importance given to exams in the wider community. Over time, exams, exam culture and exam-related practices have become interwoven into the Samoan world. This process has been two-way. Aspects of faaSamoan have been incorporated into examination practices and at the same time, exam practices and exam culture have subtly transformed aspects of Samoan culture and created new areas of activity and meaning. From this perspective exams are social products. However, exams are also social processes (Filer 2000) and as such have significant impact on teaching and learning in schools, on teachers and students and ultimately on the wider society.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate Samoan values, beliefs, aspirations, understandings, and perspectives relevant to primary education and explore how these impact on the student as a learner and the teacher in his/her work. The thesis brings together data gathered in interviews with students, parents, teachers, and educational experts and observations in primary classrooms. In so doing the thesis provides a multi-perspectival glimpse into primary education. From the privileged position of researcher who is privy to a multiple voices in the field, I have attempted to ‘hear’ and re/present participant perspectives. The thesis reveals often tacitly held ways of viewing the world. In so doing the thesis makes explicit the links between culture and aspects of primary education and provides a platform for informed discussion.

The thesis unsettles the belief that formal education in Samoa and the Pacific is culturally incompatible and an alien form imposed by former colonial powers (Helu Thaman 1991; 1996; 2002; Tavana 1994; 1997; Nabobo 1998; Afamasaga 1999; 2002). Whilst structural aspects of education reflect their Western origins (e.g. the existence of institutions called schools, teachers as paid specialists, division of time into periods, the school day and terms, and the division of knowledge into different subject areas etc.), the critical areas of teaching practice, student approaches to learning and student-teacher interactions are profoundly influenced by the Samoan culture. This position recognises the agency of local people in their interface with colonial and modern global flows. Samoans are not passive recipients of Western educational models. Rather, Samoans have actively transformed educational practice to meet local agendas and support faaSamoa – the Samoan way. However, educational practice in Samoa is increasingly contested.

Throughout this thesis I have documented a range of tensions between educational policy and practice. Educational policy in Samoa is largely based on Western pedagogies. These pedagogies reflect Western understandings about how children learn, appropriate student-
teacher relationships and what constitutes good teaching practice. These understandings in turn reflect broader cultural values, ideologies, and worldviews. By contrast, educational practice in primary classrooms is for the most part consistent with Samoan worldviews and ideologies. The tension between policy and practice are symptomatic of the modern global world. This world is typified by unprecedented flows of goods, peoples, ideas, money, images, and structures across, between, and within national borders.

This chapter relooks at the relationship between what happens within primary schools, the Samoan culture, and the increasing impact of the modern global world. In Section a) I suggest that different aspects of primary education form an integrated system that reflects a common set of educational values, beliefs, and understandings. These in turn reflect the values, beliefs, and understandings of the wider society. Section b) looks at the relationship between primary education and the wider context. In particular, I look at the increasing impact of global flows and the resulting tensions. I present several models that illustrate the dynamic relationship between educational practice and its temporal, social, and material location and the interplay between the global and local.

Consistent with the purpose of this thesis, Section c) focuses on the sociocultural context within which primary schools operate in Samoa. This section pulls together the various chapters by showing how values, beliefs, understandings, perspectives, structures and practices central to faaSamoan - the Samoan world, impact on education. Section d) Contested policies, practices and ideologies, theorises the increasing tensions within educational discourse as to what is good teaching practice. Competing voices reflect an increasingly heterogeneous society in Samoa and an intensification of global influences. This section juxtaposes Western and Samoan ideologies that underpin education. It also reviews Bernstein’s visible and invisible pedagogies and their relevance to Samoa. Finally in Section f), Futures, I look at students and teachers as ‘border crossers’ and teachers as cultural mediators. I also consider Fairbairn-Dunlop’s idea (2001a) of ‘third spaces’. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the challenges facing primary education at this point in time.

162 I use tacit in the same way as Polanyi (1962) to refer to those things that are so much part of what and who we are (e.g. deeply held beliefs, values, worldviews, etc.) that we are often unaware of them.
Different aspects of school form an integrated system

Bernstein's proposes that different aspects of pedagogical practice form a coherent, inter-related message system or code (1975; 1996). Specifically Bernstein identifies teaching practice, curriculum, and assessment and argues that you cannot change one aspect without making changes to other aspects. This thesis affirms and builds on Bernstein's ideas. Firstly, the thesis gives a number of examples that demonstrate how each aspect of educational practice is interlinked and interdependent with other aspects. For example, Chapter Three shows that teacher centred methods (e.g. planning for and teaching to the class as a collective whole, the teacher as source of authority and knowledge, strong teacher control, etc.) typify classroom practice. Teacher-centred pedagogies are then shown to be consistent with: a) a narrow and tightly prescribed curriculum; b) a focus on recall and content over and above understanding; and c) regular pencil and paper type tests and exams.

Secondly, I suggest that this interconnectedness arises from the fact that underpinning teaching practice is a shared set of educational values, beliefs and understandings. These educational values, beliefs, and understandings form an overarching message system that influences how teachers and students approach teaching and learning. This perspective builds on Bernstein's theory that behind every pedagogical act is a theory of learning (ibid.). The way teachers go about their work directly reflects their ideas as to: a) the nature of children; b) how children learn; c) what is knowledge; d) how knowledge is best acquired (what are effective teaching methods); and e) what constitutes an appropriate teacher-student relationship. The latter point highlights Bernstein's (1996) distinction between instructional discourse and regulative discourse. Whereas instructional discourse focuses on the transmission of the 'official' curriculum, the regulative 'unofficial' discourse focuses on appropriate behaviour and socialisation. As noted by Bernstein, instructional discourse occurs within the context of the more general regulative discourse.

The delivery of the official curriculum occurs in the context of student-teacher relationships. In Samoa, student-teacher relationships are largely determined by a range of beliefs as to what constitutes appropriate child-adult relationships and the belief that the central purpose of education is to inculcate respect, deference, and obedience to elders. Thus schooling is about both information and moral transmission. Pedagogical discourses are constrained by moral discourses. Returning to the earlier example, teacher-centred pedagogies are consistent with
the belief that children should respect, defer to and obey adults. Teachers transmit knowledge, whilst children attend (i.e. to the teacher), listen, observe, copy, and learn. At a later stage students are expected to recall teacher-given knowledge in exams or tests. In this context children are not encouraged to question or challenge the authority and knowledge of the higher status teacher.

Thirdly, material factors also impact on pedagogical practices and educational values. Chapters Three and Six showed how a paucity of resources and poor infrastructure influence teaching and learning. Lack of books and alternative sources of information mean that teachers depend heavily on prescribed curriculum documents and students in turn depend on teachers as their sole source of information and authority. Libraries when in schools, tended to be stocked with dated, second hand, old, and often inappropriate textbooks, books, and readers. These were often perceived as junk offloaded from affluent nations to poor Pacific neighbours. The lack of resources encouraged teacher-centred pedagogies, chorus reading, rote learning, and a heavy dependence on blackboard based instruction. Finally, lack of resources influenced what subjects were taught and how.

Physical infrastructure also impacts on student learning and teaching practice. This was particularly apparent in Viliamu School where ten classes shared an open hall area and teachers depended heavily on chanting, rote learning, and repetition of answers to ensure that children heard. Material and physical constraints influence patterns of interaction. In classrooms where there was a shortage of furniture, low achieving students were often located on the floor towards the back of the classroom. This location not only conveyed certain messages about their relative status but also meant that teachers were less likely to engage with them on a one-to-one basis about their work. Thus resources, goods, and physical infrastructure embodied meanings, made subtle statements about the relative positioning of people (and countries), impacted on teaching and learning and shaped how people interacted with each other. Ultimately resources, goods, and infrastructure embodied meanings and contributed to the creation of new meanings and realities. In the same way that Bernstein (1975; 1996) describes teaching practice, the curriculum, and assessment as an interrelated message system or code so too are material factors.

Fourthly, I suggest that attempts to change one aspect of educational practice often fail because policy makers, educational planners, and teacher educators do not recognise or
understand the interdependence of the different aspects of educational practice.\footnote{Later in this chapter, I explore the idea that attempts at educational change often fail when proposed changes reflect educational and cultural ideologies that differ in significant ways from local perspectives.} This was well illustrated by student, parent, and teacher ambivalence and resistance to the new bilingual policy. Oral English is supposedly introduced in Year 2 (10% of programme). At Year 3 Oral English is supplemented by Written English (20% of programme), which increases to 30% in Year 4, and 40% in Year 5, and 50% in Years 6, 7 and 8 (Lameta 2000). Many teachers disregard this policy. Aware that the Year 8 National Examination, senior secondary exams and many school tests and exams assess students in English in four of the five subject areas, they continue to prioritise English as a subject and as the language of instruction.\footnote{As noted by Male and Lameta (1999) and Lameta (2000), students’ ability in English not only determines how well they do in exams, but simultaneously determines their access to quality secondary education, tertiary education, and well-paid employment.} This example shows that efforts to change one aspect of teaching practice often fail because they meet structural or human resistance and inertia. Successful implementation or change needs to address multiple dimensions of school at the same time.

The wider context: understanding the relationship between education and the wider setting

How teachers approach their work, how students go about their learning, and how both groups interact with each other are shaped by the wider context. Any analysis of primary education must acknowledge the multiple influences that impact on education.\footnote{In Chapter One, I touched on Bray’s theory (1993) that educational analysis needs to take a multi-disciplinary approach. I also shared Planel’s model (1997) that showed how pupil culture and educational practice are influenced by national cultures, and that national cultures in turn are shaped by tradition, history, social and crosscultural influences and policy changes.} The complex interplay of cultural, social, historical, material, economic, and political forces is particularly well illustrated in the thesis by the Year 8 National Examination. This example is briefly summarised.

The Year 8 National Examination replaced the Proficiency Exam that was introduced during the New Zealand administration (Barrington 1968). Efforts to introduce alternative forms of assessment and remove the exam have been fiercely resisted (Pereira 2002b; 2003). In the late eighties the exam was briefly discontinued but political contestation led to its rapid
reinstatement (Moli 1993; Afamasaga 1999). Some participants believed that the exam continues to serve political agendas. Several argued that its continued existence ensures that a socioeconomically advantaged and educated urban minority retain their privileged position in society whilst the rural and urban poor remain disempowered and disadvantaged.

Fiscal and material constraints (Fairbairn-Dunlop and Associates 1998; Asian Development Bank 2000; Meleisea 2000) directly and indirectly impact on the Year 8 National Examination. Financial constraints contribute to inequitable secondary options. This has created the need for a ‘fair’ selection process. Students compete in the Year 8 National Examination for places in ‘better’ schools. Financial and material constraints within families, unpredictable agricultural markets, combined with cultural values that emphasise the importance of extended family, generosity, reciprocation, and status enhancement further fuel the desire to perform well in the Year 8 National Examination. Exam success ensures access to better secondary schools, which in turn means access to better resources and teaching and enhances the likelihood of entering tertiary education, and/or finding well paid employment.

The Year 8 National Examination also fulfils other important cultural purposes. The exam provides a context for competition and status enhancement for students, their families, teachers, the school, village, and district. Desire for status (through good results) contributes to leaking and administration problems. Conversely, the exam is perceived as fairer than other selection systems where relations of mutual obligation and a desire for material rewards might influence decision making. Participants also believed that the exam encourages students and teachers to work harder. Without a formal system of accountability (i.e. exam results) many participants believed that students and teachers would become lazy and unmotivated. This perspective reflects a widely held belief that people will not act well of their own volition. Public outcomes encourage students and teachers to work harder.

Increasingly education in Samoa is influenced by the modern global world. The relationship between education and the wider context can be illustrated in a number of ways. Appadurai’s (1996) attempt to develop a theory of global cultural processes is a useful starting point. Appadurai identifies five overlapping and dynamic dimensions to global flows and calls these

\[166\] Leaking occurs when parts of or the whole examination paper is surreptitiously passed to a teacher, who then shares the answers with students and/or ensures that students have covered the content.
scapes. He identifies these as mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes and ethnoscapes. Appadurai describes these as, “different streams or flows along which material may be seen to be moving across national boundaries” (ibid.: 46). Appadurai visualises each scape as complex, fluid, overlapping, irregular in form, and coloured by certain historical, political, and social contingencies. Whereas anthropologists in the past endeavoured to find order and pattern within social phenomena, Appadurai’s scapes are predicated on change, unpredictability, tension, and the unknown. At various points the scapes converge (e.g. in the classroom). In each instance the nature of the convergence is to varying degrees shaped by a range of contextual factors. Within and between each scape emerge points of disjuncture. These are evident in the tensions between educational policy and practice.

Whereas Appadurai emphasises the idea of scapes as global flows or streams, I find more useful the image of land/scape or fields of reference. The image of landscape encompasses both the possibility of flow (clouds, water masses, etc.) and the possibility of certain constraints (hills, islands). Furthermore, landscape implies that at any one point in time some things are foregrounded and stand more sharply in focus. Conversely, other features in the landscape fade into the background and become less important. These ideas are readily illustrated when considering the impact of the modern global world in Samoa. Global influences are constrained by the material realities of being a small island state. Whilst technological innovations in the form of telecommunications, computers, cell phones, etc. flow across cultural borders, these are for the most part found in the capital. Rural schools and communities remain almost untouched by such innovations. Likewise certain scapes have dramatic impact whilst others are relatively insignificant. Hence in Samoa, ideoscapes that originate in Western countries promote children’s rights and challenge the use of corporal punishment (i.e. ideoscapes are foregrounded) but print and other visual media barely touch the lives of many rural children (i.e. the influence of mediascape is diffused and distant).

Whereas Appadurai described each scape as shaped by political and historical forces, I include political, historical, and material factors as land/scape in their own right. As the focus of study, the classroom or school is located at the centre and exists in dynamic

167 Refer to Chapter One for a brief summary of each scape.
168 The concept of disjuncture is discussed in Section d), Contested policies, practices, and ideologies.
interaction with a range of overlapping scapes. Each scape in turn exists in dynamic interaction and sometimes disjunction with the others. Each scape converges on the classroom and potentially transforms what happens within it. Educational processes in turn have the potential to transform each scape. This idea is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Converging land/scapes

The model in Figure 5 has shortcomings in that it does not show how each scape inhabits and crosscuts multiple locations and that in each location each scape is mediated by people and structures. These people and structures provide a filtering effect. An alternative model (Figure 6), again places the classroom at the centre but this time the classroom is surrounded by a series of concentric circles. Each circle represents an increasingly physically removed location (e.g. the classroom, school, village, the district, the administrative centre/national government, Pacific Rim countries, and the world beyond). Each concentric circle is best thought of as an elastic band, always moving, sometimes close and sometimes distant. Again using the elastic band image, each concentric circle is also able to crosscut (literally lift over) other concentric circles. Conversely, sometimes one or more concentric circles mediate or filter the influence of another circle.
Figure 6 becomes a useful tool when discussing features of globalisation. For example, in the postmodern world of rapid communication, the once distant periphery is able to interact directly with the centre (i.e. focus of study) or at any other point and visa versa. Hence, in interviews urban and rural participants talked about phoning overseas relatives for assistance to meet school-related costs. Receipt of remittances sustained rural life and enabled participation in *faalavelave* - important events and other status and relationship building activities. More frequently influences from outer circles are filtered through several other circles. In this way global flows are mediated and transformed by human agency. These processes are illustrated well in the area of educational aid. Ideological-scapes in the form of educational ideas are taken from Western contexts (i.e. the outer circles in Figure 6). These ideas are mediated and potentially accommodated, resisted, transformed, etc. at several locations. Firstly, they are negotiated at the national level of policy making and educational planning. The ideas are then mediated through project leaders, teacher educators, and trainers to teachers. Finally these ideas are mediated by teachers in classrooms and may or may not lead to changed practice.

Figure 7 brings Figures 5 and 6 together. This model (i.e. Figure 7) illustrates the idea of multiple spaces and points of mediation (i.e. the concentric circles) that are crosscut by multiple and overlapping global flows (i.e. scapes). Analogous to Rosaldo’s description of ritual as “the intersection of multiple coexisting social processes” (Rosaldo 1993: 11), the
school becomes the point of intersection, where multiple and dynamic trajectories converge, interact, transform and are themselves transformed. Extending the example from the preceding paragraph, Western-influenced ideas of children’s rights (ideological-scapes) have led to a) the introduction of educational policies that ban corporal punishment in schools and b) legislation that makes any incident a criminal offence. However, at the village and school level these policies are often not supported. Consequently, some teachers continue to physically discipline children in the classroom and many parents support their actions. Thus in this example, global flows in the form of ideas about children’s rights and physical punishment are mediated in national, village, school, and classroom spaces/locations.

![Figure 7 - Multiple spaces and points of mediation that are crosscut by overlapping scapes](image)

The sociocultural context

Whilst a multiplicity of factors (i.e. scapes) impact on education, this thesis has emphasised the local sociocultural context. Primary education in Samoa is profoundly influenced by the *faaSamoa* - Samoan way. Students/children and teachers/parents/elders occupy multiple subject positions (Arthur 1998). As such they carry and embody beliefs, values, and understandings from one context to another. This process is strengthened in Samoa by a cultural pattern of diffused or generalised parenting (Gerber 1985; Mageo 1988; Ochs 1988; Finau 1993). When teachers referred to students in interviews, they invariably used the generic term *tamaiti* - children as opposed to *tamaiti aoa* - school children. Consistent with
the focus of the thesis, this section highlights the local sociocultural setting. Specifically, it explores values, beliefs, perspectives, and practices central to *faaSamoa* and how they influence primary education. In so doing, this section draws together themes from different chapters.

*The importance of respect and hierarchical relationships*

Central to Samoan culture is the idea of *faaaloalo/ava* - respect. Three fundamental sayings underpin relations of respect. These are the need to *teu le va* - tidy the relationship/space (look after relationships), *iloa lou tulaga* - know your place (and behave accordingly), and the importance of the *va fealoai* - relations of respect (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). All groups of participants believed that children should learn *va fealoai* - relations of respect at school. In interviews, participants linked respect with being *faautauta* - careful/cautious, *usita'i* - obedient, *filemu* - having a quiet disposition, showing deference, and a willingness to please. Collectively these dispositions are strongly associated with academic success.

Relations of respect in Samoa are closely interlinked to acknowledgment of age and status. Indeed Samoa is often described as a hierarchical society (Shore 1982; 1996; Freeman 1984; Ochs 1988; Duranti 1990; 1992; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Huffer and So'o 2000; Odden and Rochat 2004). Hierarchical relations and relationships of respect have a number of implications in students' schooling. Firstly, relations of respect have a positive impact. Students for the most part listened attentively, carefully and willingly followed instructions, and were polite in their interactions with adults. Such behaviours are consistent with the belief that children at home and school learn by *faalogo* - attending/listening, *tilotilo* - observing, *usitai* - obeying and, if necessary, doing. These behaviours utilise and develop receptive skills (as suggested by the emphasis on *faalogo* -listening/attending behaviours) and an orientation of the child (lower status) around the adult (higher status). Receptive orientations are in turn consistent with transmission pedagogies (i.e. teacher passes knowledge on to student) as opposed to constructivist (i.e child actively participates in meaning making).

Hierarchical relations and relations of respect made it difficult for some children to question or challenge teachers.\(^{169}\) Students (lower status) for the most part accepted without question

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\(^{169}\) This is consistent with the cultural pattern that higher status persons have the right to assert their authority, express their thoughts and feelings, control and define meaning. Conversely, a lower status person should not
both the content of lessons and how teachers went about teaching. Despite teachers’ invitation to ask questions students seldom did. When teachers asked if students understood, students almost always gave the ritualised ‘Malamalama faafetai’ ([We] understand thank you) response. Similarly students were uncomfortable to place demands on teachers. When students did not have a pencil or book, they preferred to discretely borrow or share. When they completed their work, they quietly interacted with peers and waited for teachers to initiate new activities. Likewise when students did not know what to do they did not approach teachers. Indeed in fieldwork schools it was not uncommon for 45 minutes to pass without a child approaching a teacher at his/her desk. Finally, relations of respect and deference to higher status adults meant that students sometimes acquiesced to teachers’ perspectives and wishes against their will.

Relations of respect and deference to hierarchically superior individuals contributed to teacher-centred and transmission type pedagogies. Teachers, like adults in the wider community, tended to “initiate, control and regulate interactions” with children (Odden and Rochat 2000: 8). Higher status adults/teachers define what counts as knowledge that they then impart to children. Students are expected to pu’e - catch, teu - put away, taofi - hold/retain, and toe fafagu - wake up (recall) this knowledge in tests/exams. Thus relations of respect and deference worked against the development of critical and independent thought. Relations of respect and deference are also consistent with the pervasive test/exam culture and its emphasis on recall (i.e. of knowledge imparted by the higher status teacher) rather than understanding (i.e constructing one’s own knowledge).

In Samoa there is also a strong emphasis on status relationships. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) suggests that fluidity in status relations contributes to a constant striving for status. In interviews, participants made direct and indirect references to status relations and their impact on children’s schooling. Firstly, all groups believed that tests and exams encouraged students to compete with each other and therefore work harder. Some teachers attributed leaking and supervision problems to individuals succumbing to pressure in their desire to be noticed.


170 A number of other researchers refer to adult investing considerable energy in their efforts for status enhancement in Samoa (Howard 1986; Duranti 1992; Vaipae 1999; Poasa et al. 2000).
Secondly, parents saw success at school as a means to enhance individual and family status. Success at school translated into a good income that enabled children to look after their parents and extended family and participate in status raising and relationship building activities (e.g. give material and financial contributions to faalavelave - important events and the church).

Thirdly, students, parents, and teachers believed that the desire for status influenced some parents’ choice of school for their children. When asked which rural parents sent their children into town schools, participants identified three broad groups. Those who did so for reasons of convenience (i.e. those who worked in town), those who were mauaoloa – wealthy, and finally those who were fiasili or fia naualuga - desired to be above others and fiasio - show offs. Several explicitly stated that some high-up families (e.g. ministers and successful business owners) did not want their children mixing with the village riff-raff.

Hierarchical relationships impacted in other ways on attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and people’s actions in primary schools. Consistent with the difficulty of challenging and/or criticising those in hierarchically superior positions, blame for poor results was invariably placed on students and sometimes on parents. (Yet in other contexts participants acknowledged that some teachers were le faamaoni - not honest or le toaga - not conscientious/hardworking in their work.) Status relations affected how some teachers approached and interacted with students and students’ perceptions about themselves and their rights within the classroom. In interviews some students and parents stated that some teachers took less notice of children who they perceived as from faatauvaa - lowly or poor families. By contrast they were more careful in their interactions and showed greater interest in children from aiga lelei - good families or aiga mauaoloa - well off families.

Schools, like the wider society (Shore 1982), are typified by clear boundaries between hierarchically distinct groups (i.e. teachers and students), explicit rules, and strong external control. Students took care to not enter teacher-designated spaces (e.g. the staff room, morning tea or lunch areas). Students did not seek out teachers to share items of interest, personal news, and opinions. Teachers initiated student-teacher interactions. Again as in the wider society (Mageo 1988; 1998; Ochs 1988) hierarchical relationships created distance and formality in child/student-adult/teacher relationships. Conversely, strong horizontal groupings (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991) contributed to strong peer relationships (Baker 1986; Mageo 1988;
1998; Ochs 1988). In the classroom, students chose to approach classmates for stationery items, share, ask questions, interact, and get assistance with their work. Some teachers recognised this and actively used peer interaction as a teaching tool.

Platt (1986) and Ochs (1988) associate certain behaviours with higher status as opposed to lower status persons. Specifically they note that higher status persons show comparatively low levels of movement, use minimal energy and show reduced interest in the activities of children and adolescents. They also note that caregiving roles are generally left to older children and adolescents (i.e. as opposed to adults). These observations combined with the earlier observation that children are expected to orientate around the higher status adult have interesting implications in the classroom. Educational policy, pre and in-service teacher education programmes call for the introduction of child-centred approaches, alternative forms of assessment and individual instruction. Each requires of teachers more active engagement with students. Specifically each requires teachers to focus on students as individuals, identify and respond to their needs. Collectively, such practices require teachers to invert common cultural patterns (i.e. where children acknowledge adult status by serving them). Instead, teachers are called on to orientate around children and their needs.

Not only were students bound by relations of respect but so too were parents and teachers. Teachers equated the recent escalation of parents challenging the right of teachers to hit their children with a loss of respect for teachers and their status. Specifically they noted that those parents who challenged teachers were often urban, overseas educated, and in high status positions. Parents' complaints were seen as a challenge to the authority of the teacher. Relations of respect also impacted on teachers' interactions with those in higher positions. Teachers in a rural school went without basic resources rather than request a SRO to uplift an item from central MESC offices and deliver it on their regular visits. Finally, as noted by Duranti (1992), relations of respect and deference to those of higher status worked against change. Instead, relations of respect encouraged people to continue to comply “with a system of relations and social obligations that can help maintain and help reproduce the social system - with its hierarchies, mutual obligations and worldview - intact and unaffected by the continuous threat of change” (ibid.: 95).

*The significance of spatial relations*
Spatial relations and people's location within those spaces has important implications in primary education. In Samoa, educational policies (i.e. policies promoting more child-centred approaches) require teachers to metaphorically place children in the centre. By contrast, in faaSamoa, children are often metaphorically and physically placed on the periphery. In the Samoan culture, front and centre areas are associated with high status persons, the public view, formality, and appropriate behaviour (Shore 1982; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; and Duranti 1994). Conversely, back and periphery areas are associated with lower status persons, informality, the private/unseen and sometimes - the dark side of human nature.

People's location in space had huge implication in fieldwork schools. In the classroom children's place in class (based on test and/or exam results) determined where they sat. High achieving students were almost always located at the front.¹⁷¹ Significantly, teachers were more likely to engage with students at the front and these students in turn were more likely to approach and/or ask teachers questions. When there was an inadequate number of tables or desks, low-achieving students sat on the floor near the back. Thus location in some classrooms conveyed important messages about who was and who was not valued and shaped student-teacher interactions. Conversely, students, parents, and teachers believed that school provided students an opportunity to relocate themselves both within the classroom and ultimately within the wider society.

Linked to front/back locations were subtle changes in teachers' language, persona and availability. At the front, teachers almost always used the polite t and n form (as appropriate to their role as teacher). At the back, teachers occasionally used the more informal and common k and g form. Similar to Va’a’s description of the teacher at the front being like the conductor of a traditional singing group (1987b) there was also an on/off stage element. At the front the teacher was ‘in role’ and available to students. By contrast, students did not perceive the teacher at their desk as available. The in/out of role distinction was often marked by the ritualised inquiry at the end of a blackboard lesson as to whether students understood

¹⁷¹ In interviews many students and teachers associated academic achievement with social location (i.e. that children who did well generally came from 'good' families). Hence physical location in the classroom (and in larger schools whether a student was in A, B or C stream) often brought together social location and academic rank.

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or had any questions. For many students this exchange symbolised closure of access to the teacher.

Front-back relations also impacted on other aspects of education. Some parents and teachers believed that: a) town schools received more and better resources because they were closer to MESC; b) town teachers (i.e. centre/front in relation to MESC) worked harder because of their proximity to MESC and ready visibility; and c) some town teachers and students *manatu faatauvaa* - regard as less important *tagata mai tua* - rural people (literal - people from the back). Centre-periphery relations were often fluid and perceptions shifted with people's relative location. Hence for some rural students and parents, Apia was perceived as periphery, dark, and dangerous (i.e. where children might be led astray, *taa* - roam about, and smoke).

**The importance of relationships and reciprocity**

Directly linked to the importance of *faaaloalo/ava* - respect is a strong emphasis on maintaining good relationships. When participants talked about the importance of school all focused on the pragmatic importance of getting a good education in order to find well paid employment. Underlying the pragmatic focus and, indeed, of far greater importance was the idea that good employment would enable children to one day look after their parents, contribute to the extended family, church, and *faalavelave* - culturally significant events. Thus, going to school and getting a good education was primarily about the building and maintaining of significant relationships.

Liu (2003) describes all relationships as sacred and sealed by *feagaiga* - covenants. In interviews similar themes emerged. Parents and teachers strongly believed that if people lived good Christian lives, gave generously to the church (i.e. had their relationship with God in order), were generous, worked hard, and looked after their parents (i.e. had their relationships with other people in order) then they, and more importantly their children, would be blessed. The belief in *faamamuiaga a le Atua* - blessings of God had a range of interesting implications in education. Firstly, some teachers continued to work hard despite the low pay knowing that ultimately their efforts would be rewarded by God. Secondly, parents and many teachers

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172 This in other contexts is referred as to the 'Malamalama faafetai' ritual. Often teachers followed this with a statement that there was to be no further questions.
described success in exams, entry to elite secondary schools, tertiary opportunities and well-paid employment as evidence of God’s blessings and a direct consequence of relationships being in order. In each instance, God’s blessings represented a dislocation of time, space, and agency. Actions of people (i.e. parents and elders) distant in time and space impacted on their children.

Ideas about relationships impacted on teaching and learning in other ways. From a Western perspective student achievement is directly linked to the quality of teaching (Hattie 2003; Lingard 2003). In Samoa, participants placed greater emphasis on the child/student and his/her actions. Academic success was closely associated with a range of behaviours. Good students were toaga - conscientious/hardworking. More importantly good children and good students showed certain relational dispositions. Good children and good students were fuaaloalo/ava - respectful, faalogo - quiet/attentive, usita - obedient, and lotomaualalo - humble.

Parents and students also linked success at school with reciprocity. Good parents prayed on their children’s behalf, fed and clothed their children and worked hard to meet school related costs. Indeed for many parents the mere act of sending a child to school was a sacrifice in the sense of lost manpower. The loving child in turn worked hard at school and endeavoured to do well. To do badly in exams was not only was a source of shame and disappointment but also suggested that the child was “le alofa i lona matua” (did not love his/her parents).

A sociocentric orientation
The emphasis on relationships and reciprocity rather than the individual and self is consistent with descriptions of Samoa as a sociocentric or collective society (Sutter 1980; Ochs 1988; Moli 1993; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Mageo 1991; Poasa et al. 2000). The well-being of the group is perceived to be of greater importance than the individuals who make up the group (Sutter 1980; Tavana 1994; Ewalt and Makuau 1995; Vaipae 1999). Identity is constructed (and felt) in reference to the wider group and embedded in relationships (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Ewart and Makuau 1995; Poasa et al. 2000). This is succinctly expressed by a foremost Samoan leader and thinker. “I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging. ... These are the reference
points, which define who I am, and they are the reference points of other Samoans” (Tupua Tamasese Efi 2003: 4-5).

Sociocentric or communal orientations impacted on children’s schooling in significant ways. Children tended to perceive themselves and were perceived by others (including teachers) as extensions of their families. When a child behaved badly both the child and his/her family were shamed. Conversely, a child’s achievement belonged to both the child and parent. The linking of a child’s sense of self with their parents and extended family has interesting implications. In some classrooms some children were more comfortable to claim teacher time and ask questions. These children tended to be high achievers and/or from aiga lelei - good families. By contrast, a child from a faatauvaa - lowly/not important family carries this persona and associated interactional styles into the classroom. As Ewalt and Makuau (1995) observed, if the family has diminished power, so too does the individual who belongs to that family.

Sociocentric orientations often contribute to increased sensitivity to being shamed. In Samoa shaming is identified as an important socialisation tool (Schoeffel 1979; Ochs 1988; Mageo 1991; 1998; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996). In interviews, students cited fear of being shamed by the teacher or peers as effecting their willingness to ask and answer questions and take risks. A small number of teachers used put downs to belittle and shame children in front of their peers. Students and teachers talked about cases where children discontinued going to school because they were ashamed that their families could not provide fafaga - food for the teachers’ lunch or because their fees were unpaid. A small number of parents and teachers thought that some children were put off going to school by the public sharing of results (e.g. calling out students’ ranked position at annual prizegiving ceremonies). However, most thought that public sharing acted as a powerful motivator.

Shore (1982), Ewalt and Makuau (1995), and Poasa et al. (2000) describe Samoa as a shame culture where people’s actions are strongly influenced by what other people might think. In rural contexts, life is played out with a constant sense of audience and scrutiny (Shore 1982; O’Meara 1990; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991). Homes tend to be open in structure (i.e.

173 As stated in Chapter Five, parents were not concerned about the negative effects of hitting. Of greater concern was that a child’s bad behaviour might escalate and become a source of shame to both the child and parents.
have no sides or have open louvre windows) and there are few physical boundaries. Interview material suggested strong links between awareness of being watched, external control, and appropriate behaviour (reminiscent of the centre/front). For example, some parents believed that teachers close to the MESC office worked harder because they were more readily observable. Likewise, Year 8 National Examination results (and exams results in general) made public statements about students, teachers, and schools. Many parents believed that without this public accountability (e.g. exam results) students and teachers would not work as hard.

Within the educational sector, control was strongly externalised and visible. The prevalence of eternal controls reflects the belief that without these, people of their own volition may act in socially undesirable and selfish ways (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991). Hence Head Teachers checked teachers’ Weekly Plans, visited classrooms to see that boards were written up and plans followed. Head Teachers in turn were overseen by SRO. In the classroom, strong externalised control is consistent with teacher-centred pedagogies. Significantly, whilst people recognised and valued strong external controls, they also sought ways to escape them. Thus within educational success lay a contradiction. On the one hand it enabled a person to participate in socially valued and reciprocal relationships but on the other hand it made possible a more individualistic lifestyle in the capital or overseas. Likewise, rural parents feared for their children at school in Apia, that out of sight they might la ‘a - roam about, smoke, and be influenced by bad things and bad people.

Mageo (1991; 1998) documents how socialisation downplays the individual and encourages a sociocentric orientation. In a similar way interaction patterns in the classroom downplayed the development of individual identities. Teachers tended to teach to the class as a collective whole. Praise tended to be infrequent and general in content and direction. Teachers felt no need to placate or offer justification to students about what they were expected to do and why. There was also minimal orientation around the child as an individual, and little acknowledgment of individual differences and needs. Children worked on the same tasks at the same time and seldom had the opportunity to exercise agency. Collectively these patterns

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174 At the beginning of fieldwork, MESC offices were surrounded by Malifa Compound schools.
encouraged group identification and strong peer relationships (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Mageo 1991; Schoeffel 1996).

**Appropriate behaviour**

Interlinked to the importance of relationships and a sociocentric orientation is a strong emphasis on appropriate behaviour. All participants believed that children went to school in order to become *poto* or *atamai*. Whilst participants used both terms to imply a cluster of academic abilities and qualities, far greater emphasis was placed on the idea that the *poto* person knew how to behave appropriately and displayed respect in their interactions with others. The emphasis on appropriate behaviour in school is illustrated in the following example. In a comparison of French and English primary education systems, Planel (1997) observed that parents’ statements to their children reflected core educational and societal values. In France, parents tend to farewell their children with the phrase, “*Bon travaille*” (Work hard/well), whereas English parents tend to say “*Have a good/enjoyable day.*” By contrast, Samoan parents are more likely to make comments related to how children should behave. Hence parents might say, “*Faalogo lelei i le faiaoga*” (Listen/attend to the teacher) or “*Usitai i le faiaoga*” (Obey the teacher). Parents also instructed children to “*Vaai lelei i sio tei*” (Watch/Look after your younger sister/brother/cousin). The heavy focus on behaviour was also reflected in students’ reports. As documented in Chapter Six, teachers’ comments focused almost exclusively on behaviour and moral qualities.

As mentioned earlier, culturally appropriate behaviours are strongly associated with academic success. *Faaaloalo/ava* - respectful, *usitai* - obedient, *faalogo* - attentive/listening, *filemu* - quiet, and *toaga* - hard working/conscientious behaviours are perceived to make a person *poto* - in the sense of do well at school. Simultaneously these qualities are seen as evidence of being *poto* - clever/wise. These behaviours emphasise receptive qualities and are consistent with informal and formal pedagogies (i.e. looking, listening, orientating around adults, copying and/or repeating adult actions). Significantly, education policies advocate student learning behaviours that are not commonly associated with academic success. These policies

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175 Some teachers claimed that the human audience was not important to them and without external controls they would still continue to work hard. Instead they emphasised the idea of an all-knowing God as the ultimate judge and authority. In the latter instance, the external control is shifted from other people to an all-knowing God.

176 In the body of the thesis I show that the word *faalogo* is closely associated with the concept of obedience.

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advocate that students will inquire, question, challenge, and actively participate in meaning making. These policies place value on expressive qualities.

In interviews, participants described academically weak children as *malosi le taalo* - tending to play/muck about, *lē faalogo* - not attentive/listening, *faalogogata* - disobedient, *paie* - lazy, and in some cases *lē alofa* - not loving (in the sense of feeling no obligation to do well for one's parents). Again, linking back to the concept of *faamaniaga a le Atua* – God's blessings and the importance of relationships being in order, a dislocation of time, space, and agency re-emerges. The child who is *toaga* at home, willingly helps, serves, shows respect to their elders, and is obedient will do well in school.

Associated with different hierarchical groups (e.g. children and adults) are different sets of relational behaviours. Whereas children ideally express relations of caring and love through respect, obedience, and willingness to serve adults, adults express love and caring towards lower status children by urging, guiding, instructing, correcting, and if necessary physically disciplining them. In interviews, small children were portrayed as essentially wayward, unruly, and lacking thought and control. The caring parent and teacher demonstrates their love by guiding and disciplining children, thus ensuring that they know how to behave appropriately, do not bring shame upon their families and emerge as socially responsible people. If the teacher or parent fails to do this, adults fear that children's bad behaviour will escalate. Thus the indulgent teacher and/or parent, who lets a child be, is both irresponsible and lacks genuine love for the child.

*Life as performance*

The focus on appropriate behaviour, maintaining relationships, and awareness of an ever-present audience creates a sense of performance that has been identified by earlier researchers (Duranti 1988; Ochs 1988; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Shore 1996). This impacted in a number of ways on the classroom. Firstly, performance implies a performer. The teacher at the front of the classroom actively teaching, symbolises the teacher on stage and in role as opposed to the teacher at his/her desk, the doorway or verandah (i.e. off stage, out of role, and not readily available).
Student learning behaviours also contained performative elements. When students read in unison and chanted tables and spelling words in chorus, their collective voice followed a distinctive singsong cadence and rhythm. The speed, cadence, and rhythm carried a sense of disembodiment, suggesting a disassociation of the intellectually and emotionally engaged self from the action. Significantly and suggestive of performance as a form of invocation, it appeared that many students and teachers believed that in the act of reading, chanting, and responding in chorus, children learn. The act (action) is sufficient.

The focus on performative and visible aspects of school-life were evident in other ways. According to participants, good teachers came to school each day (i.e. physical embodiment), were tidily dressed, wrote up their boards, stayed in their classrooms and handed in their work plans. Good students also came to school each day, took care to lay their work out correctly, and present it tidily. Indeed the focus on tidiness and getting things right often took precedence over and above understanding and was counter-productive to efficient use of school time.

Contested policies, practice and ideologies

The preceding section illustrated how primary education is profoundly influenced by faaSamoa. Teachers and students bring into the classroom a set of beliefs, values, aspirations, understandings, worldviews, and preferred practices. These shape how teachers go about their work, how students go about their learning and how each group interacts with the other. Increasingly there are tensions within the educational sector and the wider public as to what constitutes ‘good’ teaching. Education policies, teacher education programmes and MESC/aid funded teacher in-services promote: a) child-centred practices (e.g. planning and teaching in response to children’s needs, providing opportunities for children to exercise agency); b) inquiry-based learning; c) the development of critical and independent thought; d) the development of the individual and individual expression; e) activity-based learning; and f) the development of problem solving skills (Educational Policy and Planning Development Project Committee 1995a).

These policies are strongly influenced by Western pedagogies. Western practices in turn are shaped by certain ideologies about children, their place in society, how children learn, how
they are best taught, and what constitutes an appropriate and pedagogically sound student-teacher relationship. These ideologies in turn reflect profoundly different cultural values, beliefs, understandings, and ways of operating in the world.

In the following section I summarise aspects of Samoan culture and juxtapose them against Western values and ideologies. The contrasting values and ideologies make apparent why there are often disparities between policy and practice, and why policies often meet resistance and inertia. The contrasting ideologies should be visualised as parts of loose and multidimensional continuums. Whereas Samoan culture sits closer to the sociocentric position, Western culture is portrayed as more individualistic in orientation (Ewalt 1995; Schoeffel and Meleisea 1996; Vaipae 1999; Woodrow 2001; Hoffman 2003). With the increasing flow of people and ideas across national borders, location and ideologies are no longer clear cut. Neither is there a ready correlation between ethnicity, values, beliefs, ways of viewing the world and preferred practices. Indeed in the modern global world, culture is frequently dislocated from point of origin and increasingly fluid.
### Samoan world view

**Sociocentric orientation**
- group/family well-being foremost
- va - relationships of primary importance
- identity of individual closely linked to family/group
- sublimation of personal desires/wishes

**Key ideologies**
- *teu le va* - look after relationships
- *iloa lou tulaga* - know your place
- *va fealoai* - relations of respect
- reciprocity, generosity

**Features**
- focus on appropriate behaviour
- outcomes or consequences of a person’s action emphasised
- ability to read contexts and adapt behaviour is valued
- performance central (social mask/discontinuity between self and action)
- rule orientated - explicit control
- potential for public scrutiny acts as social control - externalised control
- shared shame (individual’s action reflects on family)
- receptive abilities (ability to attend to, listen and ‘read’ contexts) valued

### Western world view

**Focus on individual**
- individual central
- idea of bounded person
- emphasis on self determination/choice
- emphasis on self actualisation and empowerment of individual

**Key ideologies**
- individual rights
- being true to oneself
- to know oneself
- independence and autonomy valued

**Features**
- right to individual expression
- intentions or motives emphasised
- personal consistency across contexts valued
- idea of integrated person - internal consistency across contexts
- principle orientated society
- doing what feels right – implicit control-guilt culture
- individual responsibility for actions
- guilt culture - actions determined in part by the potential to feel good/bad inside
- expressive abilities emphasised

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In various chapters of this thesis, I have suggested that aspects of teaching practice in Samoa closely align with Bernstein’s (1975; 1996) visible pedagogy. Visible pedagogies philosophically and structurally mirror features of societies that have a more sociocentric orientation and as noted by Bernstein foster sociocentric/communal relationships. By contrast, invisible pedagogies align with Western pedagogies and ideologies. Pedagogies suggested in policy statements in Samoa align closely with invisible pedagogies.
In Samoa, present teaching practices and student-teacher relationships closely align with Bernstein’s visible pedagogy and socialise children towards sociocentric orientations. Visible pedagogies, consistent with hierarchical relationships and a cultural emphasis on respect and deference to those in positions of authority, also maintain and reinforce the status quo. By contrast, MESC policies and practices promoted in in-services and teacher education programmes reflect Western educational ideas and are based on Western ideologies. Western pedagogies align with Bernstein’s invisible pedagogy and socialise children towards more individualistic orientations and create greater possibility of change (i.e. are culturally destabilising).
A number of complex issues arise from these observations. Pacific educator, Nabobo, states that, “Schooling and classroom practices must acknowledge and be made to adjust and reflect the cultural contexts within which they exist” (Nabobo 1998: 21). However, Nabobo does not question what is meant by cultural context. Instead, she suggests that schooling should align with the ideologies and preferred practices of the society within which it is located. However, Samoans by choice move and live in an increasingly globalised world. Approximately half of the population resides in Pacific Rim countries. Relations between Samoa and these diasporic communities are typified by a constant flow of goods, money, people, ideas, and practices. Increasingly the cultural context for Samoans (in Samoa and overseas) is a bricolage of Samoan and Western worlds, both within and beyond Samoa.

Education policies in Samoa recognise the increasingly globalised world. Policies call for an education system that “combines indigenous and global knowledge within a bilingual structure and promotes an international standard of academic achievement” (Department of Education 2003: 7). The 2003 document then reiterates the 1995 policies (Educational Policy and Planning Committee 1995a) that, without exception, reflect Western-influenced pedagogies, ideologies, and ways of relating. The document also states a desire to “promote, retrieve and disseminate Samoan values, tangible and intangible heritage” (ibid.: 7) Apparent in the preceding statements are inherent tensions. Put simply, parents and teachers recognise the need for children to learn about the global world and acquire a second language but do not want them to behave like palagi - white Western children.

A number of critical questions emerge from the preceding discussion. These are summarised below:

- How can those aspects of pedagogical practices that support valued aspects of faaSamoa be retained whilst simultaneously introducing pedagogical approaches that might better equip children for the modern global world?
- How can you have teaching practices that are child-centred (i.e. pedagogies typified as invisible pedagogies and associated with more individualistic orientations), and at the same time retain Samoan values of reciprocity, generosity, and the well-being of the family/group over and above the individual?
- How can children come critical and independent thinkers yet continue to show respect and deference towards adults?
- How can you have pedagogies where teachers orientate around children (i.e. by focusing on and identifying children’s needs, adapting and responding to those needs) yet maintain a society where children are encouraged to orientate around adults and place the needs of others over and above their own?
Educational practices and the wider society exist in a dialectical relationship (Broadfoot 1996; Woodrow 2001). Whilst the wider society (and increasingly the global world) shape and influence what occurs within classrooms, so too what happens within classrooms shapes the wider society. As recognised by participants, schooling is both enabling and dark and dangerous - a wolf dressed in a lambskin. Parents simultaneously desire and fear its outcomes. On the one hand education enables the meeting of valued social goals and, on the other hand, it creates opportunities for more individualistic lifestyles, social and physical distance. As Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) noted, in the process of adopting new policies and practices there are invariably unforeseen outcomes.

The unpredictability and contrariness of our human endeavour is evident in Bernstein’s model. Bernstein sees invisible pedagogies as being about the blurring of boundaries between people, between things, time, and space. In short invisible pedagogies are about bringing people together and merging time and space boundaries. Yet at the same time invisible pedagogies foster the development of individual identities and separateness and, in so doing, undermine social cohesiveness and cultural reproduction. Visible pedagogies, on the other hand, are about separateness between hierarchically distinct groups, and the maintenance of space and time boundaries (i.e. the antithesis of being in relationship). Yet visible pedagogies encourage the emergence of sociocentric dispositions and foster social cohesion and cultural continuity.

Global flows and educational policy: a synopsis

Earlier in this chapter, I took and extended Appadurai’s image of the modern world as “an interactive system” (Appadurai 1996: 27) typified by ever-increasing flows of people, ideas, images, capital, and technology. Building on his image of scapes, I added historical, sociocultural, political and material fields of reference. I also emphasised the imagery and

177 The image of education as a ‘wolf dressed in lambskin’ is borrowed from a letter to the editor of a local paper in the early nineties. The writer lamented changes in young people’s behaviour and blamed these changes on the educational system.

178 The hidden consequences of change and the potential for Western practices to impact negatively on local culture is well illustrated by the introduction of metered water. Metered water works against communal interaction and faaSamoan principles of reciprocity. In the past villagers (and often Apia residents) converged on community or neighbours’ taps. With the introduction of meters and user payer practices, families are increasingly unwilling to let others use their water supply and an important opportunity for informal social interaction is removed.
connotations that the term ‘landscape’ engenders. Namely, the idea that some aspects of a landscape are foregrounded, whilst others recede from vision (yet continue to exist). At any one point in time and at any one location different aspects of a landscape become focal. The landscape metaphor also accommodates the idea of movement and relative stasis. Certain scapes or fields of reference more readily flow across national borders, whilst others remain relatively fixed. Hence, images, capital, and goods rapidly traverse the world, whilst social and political structures tend to be more anchored to particular settings.

Peoples also respond in different ways to different scapes. In some contexts, people readily embrace certain scapes yet simultaneously negotiate and/or resist others. In Samoa for example, people readily embraced educational aid in the form of new buildings and resources (i.e. goods) but resisted educational aid in the form of new ideologies and practices. Reflective of the increasingly diversified society, different individuals and groups in Samoa respond in multiple ways to the same scape. Hence, well travelled, Pacific Rim educated Samoans are more open to Western educational ideas whilst rural, locally trained teachers are not.

Appadurai’s theory of global cultural processes is hugely relevant to the discussion on the tensions between educational policy and educational practice. For Appadurai, scapes are fluid, overlapping streams or flows that exist in dynamic interaction with each other. At the same time they frequently “exist in disjunction with respect to one another” (ibid.: 46) and in so doing create uncertainty, contradictions, and tension. These tensions and uncertainties were repeatedly visible during fieldwork.

Sometimes disjunctions and tensions were evident within scapes. For example, disjunctions within ideological-scapes occurred when educational policy (influenced by Western discourses on children’s rights) banned physical punishment in schools, but local teachers and parents supported the use of reasonable force. Indeed, as documented in this thesis, teachers and parents believed that without physical discipline children might become wayward, lose respect for their elders, and not do well at school. In this instance a disjunction or tension existed between different ideologies about children, their nature, and rights.

Disjunctions also existed between scapes. Again these were often apparent in the tensions between educational policy and practice. For example, educational policy promoted
individualised and small group instruction (ideological-scape) but lacked resources to successfully implement it (material-scape). Likewise, educational policy promoted inquiry-based learning, critical and independent thought. However, these ideas were seldom realised in the classroom because they required teachers and students alike to behave in ways that contradicted patterns of interaction between adults and children, high and low status persons. In these instances, ideological-scapes existed firstly in disjunction with material-scapes and secondly in disjunction with sociocultural-scapes.

Disjunctures also occurred at multiple levels. At times disjunctures appeared relatively superficial in impact and innocuous in effect but often the consequences were profound and challenged the very essence of Samoan society. The flow of new technologies into people's lives in Samoa has multiple implications. On a superficial and pragmatic level a new fridge, oven, washing machine or a freezer made life functionally easier. On a deeper level such acquisitions impacted on patterns of relationships within and beyond the immediate household. Workloads were reduced, children freed to focus on schoolwork, and patterns of relationships and roles within families and the wider community changed. Washing was no longer a communal task, surpluses could be stored rather than given away, and a village child residing with relations might be perceived as a financial burden rather than a valuable helper. Likewise policies encouraging inquiry learning and critical thinking appeared relatively innocuous. However, the implications and possible consequences were profound. Knowledge was no longer assumed as given, an object defined and transmitted by certain individuals (i.e. high status teachers). Instead, children (low status) were given space to engage in the idiosyncratic act of knowledge construction. Knowledge became a fragile social construction.

Closely linked to the concept of disjunction is Appadurai's idea of synchrony. In many instances disjunction occurs because synchrony has been lost. In the modern global world objects, people, ideas, and images are dislocated from their point of origin. In such instances cultural phenomena are dislodged from their "referential world" (ibid. 29) and relocated to contexts where there is little synchrony. In other instances new links or forms of synchrony emerge. In this thesis, I have argued that exams were readily adopted and became entrenched in Samoa because they had a high level of cultural fit and/or appeal (i.e. synchrony). In this instance, aspects of Samoan culture like fluid status relations, a relatively high level of external surveillance/control, a focus on public display and competition contributed to the
ready adoption of exams. In other instances, there are low levels of synchrony. In such cases, global flows are often consciously or unconsciously resisted.

The tensions between educational policy and practice reflect fundamentally different ways of viewing the world. These tensions result in part from a period of unprecedented social and economic change in Samoa (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Associates 1998; Ward and Ashcroft 1998; McDade 2002). Global processes in the form of aid, institutional restructuring, and ‘new’ ideologies increasingly impact on education. Education, in turn, acts as a conduit for global processes (Tikly 2001). In some instances educational processes facilitate global flows, whilst in other instances it transforms and/or resists them.

The effects of global flows were particularly evident within MESC and the teacher education sector. However, they have significantly less impact on the day-to-day realities of the classroom (reflecting in part structural and ideological incompatibility, inertia, and resistance). Tensions between policies and preferred practices also reflect growing social, cultural, economic, and ideological differences between different groups within Samoan society. Educational decisions at a national level, are for the most part, made by an urban elite, educated in Pacific Rim tertiary institutions and strongly influenced by Western thinking.

Although educational policy is not a focus of this thesis, the tensions between policy and practice, and between different voices within the educational sector and school communities are re-occurrent themes throughout the thesis. A number of observations emerge that are relevant to Samoa. These are summarised below:

- Educational policy is strongly influenced by global trends.
- Policymaking and implementation are not neutral processes. There are often multiple and competing voices and agendas within and between countries.
- Policies in one domain (e.g. economic) have significant impact on policies in other domains (e.g. education).
- Often educational policies, perceived as problematic in their ‘home’ country, are transposed to developing countries (e.g. decentralisation and market ideologies)
- Educational policies that are effective in one context (e.g. in New Zealand) may be problematic in a new context (e.g. in Samoa).
- Policies tend to reflect the values, beliefs, and understandings of a relatively small cross-section of the population.
• Sometimes one policy works against the implementation of another policy.
• Educational policies are unlikely to work if they are incongruent with other aspects of the educational system (e.g. curriculum, assessment and teaching practices, resourcing, and infrastructure).
• Educational policies are unlikely to work if they are inconsistent with the value systems, beliefs, understandings, and practices of significant sections of the population.
• Outcomes of policy objectives cannot be neatly projected. Sometimes policies lead to unexpected outcomes (that are counter to policy aims).
• Policies are mediated and potentially transformed at multiple points of intersection (e.g. national policymaking level, teacher trainer, SRO, Head Teacher, through to teachers and students in classrooms).
• Policies are often uneven in their application and effect.
• There is often a considerable disparity between policy and practice (e.g. disparities between MESC policies and teaching practice).

Futures

In conclusion, I return to the problems posed in this chapter. These are restated in summary form.

1. Samoa is part of a global world. Global flows increasingly impact on aspects of primary education.
2. MESC policies aim to enable students to live effectively in local and global contexts.
3. MESC policies promote the introduction of pedagogies that are largely based on Western ideologies and practices.
4. There are significant disparities between MESC policies and teaching practices in primary classrooms.
5. Observed teaching practices and student-teacher interaction patterns for the most part reflect local - *faaSamoa* ideologies about children, how they learn and appropriate child-adult relationships.
6. Educational policies and practices promoted by MESC (i.e. practices influenced by Western ideologies) foster individualistic orientations and child-adult interactions that conflict with aspects of *faaSamoa*.

These observations create a number of challenges and tensions. These are presented as two holistic and closely linked questions.

• How can primary education in Samoa prepare children for life in an increasingly globalised world and simultaneously retain valued aspects of *faaSamoa*?
How can MESC policies (i.e., policies largely based on Western ideologies and values) be reconciled with the preferred values, understandings, beliefs, and practices of most primary students, teachers, and parents (i.e., values, understandings, beliefs, and practices that reflect the faaSamoan - Samoan way)?

In this section I pick up and develop several ideas that emerged from interviews, classroom observations, and readings. These ideas are explored under the headings: a) self-conscious cultures and agency; b) creating third spaces; c) 'border crossers'; d) code-switching and multi-literacies; e) teachers as cultural mediators; and f) cultural dispositions that facilitate border crossing, code-switching, and the development of multi-literacies.

Self-conscious cultures and agency

As noted by Rosaldo (1993), our subjects of study are also reflecting and analysing individuals. In this study, this took a number of interesting forms. I was repeatedly surprised by participants' self-consciousness about their own culture and how it shaped their lives. Participants were also keenly aware of cultural difference and in many interviews juxtaposed aspects of faaSamoan with aspects of the Western world. Often they were sharply critical of Western culture. Two closely related factors appear to contribute to this heightened awareness of culture. Firstly, Kuhn proposes that when paradigms (and their associated ways of life) are threatened and/or challenged they become more self-conscious and articulated (Kuhn 1962). From this perspective, Samoa is a small, economically weak, Pacific Island that is progressively encroached upon by (and dependent on) global flows that originate for the most part in economically dominant Pacific Rim countries.

Secondly, and as discussed earlier, Samoans are an increasingly mobile and globalised people (Ward and Ashcroft 1998; Meleisea 2000). Many reside in diasporic communities and maintain active links with family in Samoa and/or other Pacific Rim communities. These diasporic communities and Samoa itself form an interlinked web of meta-societies (Bedford, MacPherson et al. 1999) typified by flows of money, goods, people, ideas, and new ways of being. Increasingly Samoans are accomplished border crossers, multi-literate in both language and cultural forms. These processes contribute to a heightened self-consciousness (Jameson 1993; Giddens 1994; Michaelsen 1997; Saenz 1997) about what constitutes Samoan culture vis-a-vis Western culture. Self-consciousness about cultural forms enables greater agency. Significantly, previous research on Samoa emphasises the idea of local agency in the interface with the modern world (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991; Liu 1991; Meleisea 1992; Kruse Vaai 1998).
Creating third spaces

Appadurai (1996) visualises scapes (i.e. cultural streams or flows etc.) as carriers of alternative scenarios and possible building blocks of imagined worlds. Modern media and technology enable us to retrieve the past and re-enact or recreate it in the present. Likewise, in the modern world things (including ideas, images, etc.) that were formerly distant in space are relocated to the here and now, and thus provide alternative cultural repertoires. Appadurai links the dramatically increased range of cultural repertoires to heightened agency. In the modern world, "the imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order" (ibid.: 31).

Linked to the idea of self-conscious cultures and agency is the idea of ‘third spaces’. Fairbairn-Dunlop (2001a) uses this expression in a paper on reducing physical punishment in Samoa. In her abstract she states that, “Finding a solution to this problem must derive from active searching, by Samoans themselves, for understanding of the causes and effects of the hitting behaviour, and the development of culturally appropriate and acceptable modifications of it” (ibid.: 203). Fairbairn-Dunlop documents a self-reporting technique where caregivers recorded when, how, and why they used physical punishment, their responses, feelings, and possible alternatives. Underlying this approach is the idea that reflection and increased self and cultural awareness create the possibility of third spaces - locally generated alternatives.

A central purpose of this thesis has been to explore and re/present student, parent, teacher, and educational ‘expert’ voices. A second purpose has been to reveal those parts of ‘who we are’ that are so deeply embedded that they are often unconsciously or tacitly held (Polanyi 1962) and make them explicit through writing them down. As in Fairbairn-Dunlop’s research (2001a), the intention is to encourage reflection and thus develop self and cultural awareness and in so doing, create the possibility of third spaces. It is hoped that those interested in education in Samoa will debate, criticise, challenge, and develop some of the ideas in the thesis and in so doing find solutions to present tensions and issues.

Border Crossers

The concepts ‘border crosser’ and ‘border zones’ are relevant to the themes of self-conscious cultures, agency and education. Anzaldua (1987) uses the term ‘border crosser’ to describe people and groups of people who have lived at the intersection of cultural interface and have,
over time, developed skills at moving between cultures, and coping with ambiguity and contradiction. Rosaldo develops the idea of border crossers by redefining contemporary culture as 'multiple border zones' (1993: 166) that are typified by a plurality of language and cultural forms. These concepts are relevant to education in Samoa. Firstly, Samoans have over the centuries interfaced with other indigenous Pacific groups and more recently (i.e. over the last 300 years) with people of Western origin. Secondly, Samoans increasingly live in multiple border zones within and beyond the physical boundaries of Samoa. Consequently, many Samoans are experienced border crossers, are familiar with ambiguity, and are proficient in moving between cultural frameworks.

**Code-switching and multi-literacies**

Anzaldua (1987) proposes that border crossers have special skills in mediating and moving between cultures and cultural frameworks. These ideas are developed by Featherstone (1995) and Kim et al. (1998). Kim et al. develop a theory that people located in cultural interfaces are not constrained by fixed identities. Location at points of cultural interface (e.g. within and beyond Samoa) creates opportunities for interaction that enable people to develop a functional fitness (i.e. competency) in moving within and between cultural frameworks. Featherstone (1995) and Edwards and Usher (1997) suggest that those who live in cultural interfaces become skilled code-switchers (i.e. proficient in moving between cultural frames) and, over time, develop multi-literacies in language and culture. Edwards and Usher describe these skills as akin to cognitive maps whilst Kim et al. talk of "systemic change in the individual’s psyche" (Kim et al. 1998: 257).

The concepts of border crossing, code-switching and multi-literacies are relevant to education in Samoa. Border crossing, code-switching and the development of multi-literacies facilitate and are facilitated by self and cultural awareness. Self and cultural awareness empowers individuals and groups to move within and between different cultural frameworks. The issues presently facing primary education in Samoa are to do with cultural interface and disjuncture. MESC policies and preferred practices are largely based on Western practices and ideologies. Present teaching practices in primary classrooms, and the ideologies of students, parents, and teachers for the most part reflect faasamoa perspectives. Students, teachers, and educational planners need to become self-conscious about: a) the dialogical relationship between pedagogy and culture; b) the differences between pedagogical models (e.g. visible and
invisible pedagogies); and c) the relationship between pedagogical models and their underlying ideologies. Such self-consciousness will enable the creation of third spaces.

**Teachers as cultural mediators**

Helu Thaman believes that Pacific teachers are in a “culturally ambiguous position” bridging Western and indigenous worlds. She challenges teachers to “mediate the interface between these different cultural systems” (Helu Thaman 1996: 17). Two interesting schools of thought emerge that are relevant to the role of the teacher as cultural mediator. One model argues that teachers should adapt their practices to the preferred (i.e. culturally aligned) learning styles of minority group students. A second model posits that teachers should provide minority group students with the knowledge and skills (i.e. cognitive tools) to confidently manoeuvre within dominant pedagogical and cultural frameworks. The latter position is supported by Singh, Dooley and Freebody (2001) in their work with Samoan secondary students in Australia and is also consistent with Bernstein’s idea (1996) of pedagogical liberation. This term refers to the process of making explicit communicative conventions, pedagogical practices, and their underlying assumptions and thus empowering teachers and students. Likewise, Vaipae (1999) talks of teachers needing to make explicit cultural differences, their implications in the classroom, and the possibility of doing things differently. Significantly, some teachers in fieldwork schools were beginning to change the ‘rules’. For example, in a Year 7 rural classroom, the teacher (RT3) repeatedly clarified to his students that at school they must ask questions and express their ideas. However, he also unequivocally expected students to maintain relations of respect and deference towards adults.

**Cultural dispositions that facilitate border crossing, code-switching, and the development of multi-literacies**

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179 Schoeffel and Meleisea (1996) refer to these two schools of thought in New Zealand. One emphasises the idea that schools should accommodate and adapt their pedagogies to better meet the needs of Pacific students. The other argues that schools and teachers should provide Pacific students the skills to achieve within the existing system.

180 The implications of the two models are highlighted in Jones (1991). Jones showed how Pacific students’ preferred learning styles (e.g. preference for listening and copying) and preferred interaction patterns (e.g. not challenging adults/teachers) worked to their disadvantage in secondary schools in New Zealand. Jones’ study also showed that students’ beliefs, preferences, and preferred learning styles powerfully influence teachers’ practice.

181 Singh, Dooley and Freebody’s (2001) work suggests that schools and teachers in their efforts to accommodate pedagogies to the perceived preferences and learning styles of minority and disadvantaged Pacific Rim students,
Kim suggests that not only do environmental factors (e.g. location at points of cultural interface) facilitate adaptability but so too do certain cultural dispositions. In Samoa several cultural orientations facilitate the ability to code-switch and cross borders. Firstly, most Samoans are skilled in contextual discrimination (Shore 1982; 1996; Ochs 1988; Duranti 1990; 1992; Mageo 1998; Tanielu 1999; Vaipae 1999). From a young age children are encouraged to ‘read’ contexts, be attuned to tone, content, speech genre (e.g. polite versus everyday speech), facial expressions, body language, and who is present. Ochs (1988) links the ability to read contexts with a sociocentric orientation and relations of *faaaloalo* - respect. Relations of respect require participants to ‘read’ contexts and accommodate to hierarchically superior others. Culturally valued *faalo* - attending and listening behaviours reflect the emphasis on ‘reading’ contexts and simultaneously heighten the ability to do so.

Secondly, Samoans are experts at adapting their behaviour to different contexts. Whereas Western cultures place value on intra-person consistency, (i.e. a person being true to him/herself and consistent across contexts), Samoans value consistency to context (i.e. behaving appropriately to context). A number of writers use the expression many *itu* - sides (Schoeffel 1979; Shore 1982; 1996; Duranti 1985; 1992; Liu 1991; Mageo 1998) to describe this characteristic. For Liu this means that, “Being Samoan can mean being different people in different settings” (Liu 1999: 168). Shore (1996) suggests that this adaptability is related to the highly contextual nature of rank and status in Samoa. The heightened ability to read contexts, adapt one’s behaviour accordingly, and take on a persona appropriate to a given context and role are invaluable skills that enable teachers and students to move between different pedagogical practices and cultural repertoires.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have suggested that the value of this thesis lies in bringing together, sharing, and making explicit the multiple voices within primary education and exploring the relationship between what happens in schools and the wider culture. I have also highlighted the misfit between MESC policies and teaching practice. This thesis shows that teaching further disempower them by excluding them from developing ‘literacy’ and competency in dominant pedagogical styles.
practice, students' approaches to learning and student-teacher interactions are profoundly influenced by student, parent, and teacher values, beliefs, and understandings. By contrast, MESC policies are largely based on Western educational ideologies and practices. I describe these tensions as issues to do with cultural interface and relate this to Appadurai's concept of disjuncture.

The modern global world is typified by ever intensifying flows of people, goods, ideas, objects, money, images, and structures. In the same way that tensions between policy and practice are symptomatic of the new global dis/order, so too solutions to these problems emerge from the modern global condition. In the preceding section, I have suggested that many generations existing at the interface of cultural flows (especially the last 300 years engaging with the Western world) have provided local people with invaluable skills and resources in mediating change and crossing borders. These include: a) a self-consciousness about what constitutes one's culture; b) a repertoire of cultural possibilities (i.e. Appadurai's warehouse of cultural scenarios); c) a sense of agency; and d) a range of multi-literacies (e.g. cultural and linguistic).

I have also emphasised the important role teachers play as cultural mediators. Teachers need to make cultural and pedagogical differences explicit to students. Such an approach creates the possibility for third spaces (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2001a). Given the heightened ability to 'read' contexts, adapt behaviour accordingly, and take on multiple personae, Samoan primary teachers and students are well equipped to explore alternative pedagogies. However, the challenge remains. Should education be about cultural reproduction or change? Is, as some people believe, education a wolf dressed in a lambskin that will turn the Samoan world upside down? How can education empower and prepare students for life in an increasingly globalised world and simultaneously retain the valued aspects of Samoan culture?
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Appendices

Appendix i: Information sheet for parents and teachers about research (Samoan)

Aoga Maualalo: Talitonuga, Manatu ma Faamoemoega o Tamaiti Aoga, Faiaoga, ma Matua i Samoa

Faamalamalamaga
Ou te faafetai atu i lo outou lagolagoina o lenei sailiiligia. Faamolemole faitau manino lenei faamalamalamaga. O lo’u igoa o Janet Pereira. Sa ou faiaoga i Samoa mo le 11 tausaga. O la ma fanau na aooga uma i Samoa ao laiti. I le taimi nei o loo matou faamautu i Niu Sila ma o loo taumafai foi mo lo’u failoga o le Ph.D.

O suesuega i Niu Sila ma Samoa i le taimi nei, ua faailoaina mai ai le vaivai o taumafaiga a alo a Samoa i aoga maualalo. O le ala lea o lo’u faia o lenei sailiiligia, ona o le fia maua o ni auala e fesoasoani ai i le atinae o mea tau aoaoga mo alo a Samoa o loo aooga i aoga maualalo. O lenei faamoemoe ua lagolagoina e le Ofisa o Aoga i Samoa ma le New Zealand High Commission.

O lea ua ala ai le faamoemoe ou te asia aoga maualalo i Samoa, ma fai ni faatalatalanoaga (Interview) ma fiaaoga, matua, faapea tamaiti aoga.

O Faatalatalanoaga (Interviews)
Ou te talosaga atu mo se avanoa e fai ai se ta faatalatalanoaga (Interview) i ou lagona, mafaufauga, talitonuga, manatu ma faatuaga i mea tau aoaoga. A e finagalo i ai, faitau, saini ma faafoi mai le pepa o lou maliliega i se taimi vave.

Faafetai tele lava

Janet Pereira

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix ii: Information sheet for parents and teachers about research

Primary Education of Samoan Students: Beliefs, Values, Thoughts and Aspirations of Students, Teachers and Parents

Information Sheet
Thank you for showing an interest in this research. Please read this information and then decide whether you are happy to be interviewed. Interviews can be in Samoan or English.

What is the Aim of this Research?
I’m working on my PhD. I’m interested in how we can improve the education of Samoan primary students in Samoa and New Zealand. I hope to spend time in schools in Samoa and interview students, teachers and parents. I’m interested in your experiences, understandings, views and beliefs about teaching, learning and school life.

Why I’m Interested? My children are part Samoan and part palagi. They grew up in Samoa and went to school here. I taught in Samoa for 11 years. We now live in New Zealand. I’m interested in the differences between schooling in Samoa and New Zealand and I’d like to see Samoan students doing well and enjoying school.

What Information I need and how it will be used?
I’d like to interview you about your experiences at school, your ideas about how children learn, what they need to learn, how they should be taught, and anything else that you think is important. Interviews will take about 1-1&1/2 hours. You can choose where to do the interview (eg. in your home or at school) and when. The interview is confidential. This means that no one will know what you say and your name will not be used.

What if you have any Questions? If you have any questions about this research, please ask me. You can also contact my supervisor.
Soifua
Janet Pereira

Contact in Samoa: Janet Pereira, ph. 20970, 26802
Janet.pereira@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Or - write to:
Department of Anthropology
University of Otago
Box 56, Dunedin
University Ph. No. - [03 479 8753]

Dr. Ian Frazer (Supervisor)
ian.frazer@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix iii: Information Sheet for parents of children to be interviewed

Aoga Maualalo: Talitonuga, Manatu ma Faamoemoega o Tamaiti Aoga, Faiaoga ma Matua i Samoa

Faamalamalamaga
Ou te faafetai atu i lo outou lagolagoina o lenei saililiga. Faamolemole faitau manino lenei faamalamalamaga

* * * * *

O lo’u igoa o Janet Pereira. Sa ou faiaoga i Samoa mo le 11 tausaga. O la ma fanau na aooga uma i Samoa ao laiti. I le taimi nei o loo matou faamautu i Niu Sila ma o loo taumafai foi mo lo’u failoga o le PhD.

O suesuega i Niu Sila ma Samoa foi i le taimi nei, ua faailoaina mai ai le vaivai o taumafaiaga a alo a Samoa i aoga maualalo. O le ala lea o lo’u faia o lenei saililiga, ona o le fia maua o ni auala e fesoasoai ai i le atinae o mea tau aoaoga mo alo a Samoa o loo aooga i aoga maualalo. O lenei faamoemoe ua lagolagoina e le Ofisa o Aoga i Samoa ma le New Zealand High Commission.

O Faatalatalanoaga (Interviews)
Ou te talosaga atu mo se avanoa e fai se faatalatalanoaga (Interview) ma lo oulua alo i ona lagona, talitonuga, ma manatu i mea tau aoaoga. A e finagalo i ai, faitau, saini ma faafoi mai le pepa maliliega (Consent Form) i se taimi vave.

Faafetai tele lava
Janet Pereira

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix iv: Interview consent form for parents and teachers

Aoga Maualalo: Talitonuga, Mafaufuga ma Faamoemoega o Tamaiti Aoga, Faiaoga, ma Matua i Samoa

O le Maliliega o Matua ma Faiaoga mo le Faatalatalanoina (Interview)

Ua uma ona faitauina le faamalamalamaga. Ou te iloa foi e mafai ona ou fesiligia pe a i ai se isi mea ou te fia malamalama atili i ai.

Ou te malamalama:
A. E pule lava a'u pe ou te fia auai.
B. O le autu o le talanoaga o le itu tau aoaoga.
C. A i ai se fesili ou te le fiafia i ai, ou te le taliina.
D. O le a ou mauaina se mealofa faatauvaa pe'a uma le faatalatalanoaga.
E. O le a malu puipuia ma le le faailoaina atu mea sa talatalanoa i ai (confidential).
F. E le faailoaina suafa o e na faatalatalanoaina pe a faailia i ni tusitusiga.

Ou te malie e fai se faatalatalanoaga.

Saini lou suafa

Aso

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix v: Interview consent form for parents and teachers

Primary Education of Samoan Students: Beliefs, Values, Thoughts and Aspirations of Students, Teachers and Parents

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

I have read the Information Sheet and understand what the project is about.

I know that I can ask for more information at any time. I also know that:

1. My participation in the project is voluntary. This means, it's my choice whether I want to be interviewed.

2. I can decide not to be interviewed at any time.

3. I know that the tapes and typed interviews will be destroyed in five years.

4. I know that the interview is about education and will be rather like a conversation. If I'm not comfortable with any question, I don't have to answer it.

5. I know that I will receive a small gift for my time and help.

6. I know that some of this research will be published. No real names will be used and no one will be able to tell who was interviewed.

7. I know that the interview is confidential.

I am happy to take part in this project.

(Signature of participant)                             (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix vi: Consent form for parents of children to be interviewed: Samoan version

Aoga Maualalo: Talitonuga, Mafaufauga ma Faamoemoega o Tamaiti Aoga, Faiaoga, ma Matua i Samoa

O le Maliliega a Matua mo le Faatalatalanoina o o latou Alo

Ua uma ona faitauina le faamalamalamaga. Ou te iloa foi e mafai ona ou fesiligia pe a i ai se isi mea ou te fia malamalama atili i ai. Ou te malamalama:

1. E pule lava a’u pe auai la’u tama.
2. O le autu o le talanoaga o le itu tau aoaoga.
3. Ua uma ona ou fai i la’u tama, a i ai se fesilii e lē fiafia i ai, aua lē taliina.
4. O le a foai atu i la’u tama sina meaaloa.
5. E lē faailoina suafa o e na faatalanoaina pe a faaalia i ni tusitusiga.
6. O le a malu puipuia ma le lē faailoina atu mea sa talatalanoa i ai (confidential).

Ou te faatagaina atu la’u tama mo lea faamoemoega.

............... ................
Saini e matua Aso

Igoa o lou alo .........................

Vasega...........

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix vii: Consent form for parents of children to be interviewed

Primary Education of Samoan Students: Beliefs, Values, Thoughts and Aspirations of Students, Teachers and Parents

PARENT OR CAREGIVER CONSENT FORM – to let your child be interviewed

I have read the Information Sheet and understand what the project is about. I have also talked to my child about the interview. I also know that:

1. I can ask for more information at any time.
2. It’s my choice whether my child is interviewed.
3. I am free to withdraw my child at any time.
4. I know that the interview will be about education and like a conversation. I have explained to my child that if they don’t like any question, they don’t have to answer it.
5. I know that my child will receive a small gift for their time and help.
6. I know that some of this research will be published but no real names will be used and that no one will be able to tell who was interviewed.
7. I know that my child’s name will not be used in discussions with other people.
8. The tapes and typed interviews will be destroyed in five years time.

I am happy to let my child be part in this project.

.................................................................  ........................................
Signature of participant                         Date

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee
of the University of Otago
Appendix viii: Questionnaire for Year 8 Teachers re Year 8 National Exam

Faamalamalamaga mo Lenei Sailiiliga

Aoga Maualalo: Talitonuga, Manatu ma Faamoemoega o Tamaiti Aoga, Faiaoga, ma Matua i Samoa

Ou te faafetai atu i lo outou lagolagoina o lenei sailiiliga. Faamolemole faitau manino lenei faamalamalamaga.

* * * *

O lo'u igoa o Janet Pereira. Sa ou faiaoga i Samoa mo le 11 tausaga. O la ma fanau na aooga uma i Samoa ao laitii. I le taimi nei o loo matou faamautu i Niu Sila ma o loo taumafai foi mo lo'u failoga o le PhD.

O suesuega i Niu Sila ma Samoa fo i le taimi nei, ua faaioaina mai ai le vaivai o taumafaiga a alo a Samoa i aoga maualalo. O le ala lea o lo'u faia o lenei sailiiliga, ona o le fia maua o ni auala e fesoasoani ai i le atinae o mea tau aoaoga mo alo Samoa o loo aooga i aoga maualalo. O lenei faamoemoe ua lagolagoina e le Ofisa o Aoga i Samoa ma le New Zealand High Commission. O lea ua ala ai le faamoemoe ou te asia aoga maualalo i Samoa, ma fai ni faatalatalanoaga (Interview) ma faiaoga, matua, faapea tamaiti aoga.

Request to Year 8 Teachers

I am interested in your thoughts about the Year 8 exam. I would be very grateful if you would fill in this questionnaire, put it in the envelope and return it as soon as possible. You can answer the questions in English or Samoan. You do not need to put your name on the paper. If you need extra space, write on the other side of the paper.

Faafetai tele lava

Janet Pereira
Questionnaire for Year 8 teachers

1. How many years have you been teaching Year 8? ______
2. How many years have you been teaching altogether? ______
3. What other positions of responsibility do you hold (e.g., Head Teacher, First Assistant, none)?
4. How many Year 8 students are in your class? ______
5. When did you begin after school classes to prepare for the Year 8 exams?

6. What days and what times do you have after school classes?

7. Have you done – or - Are you doing any other classes to prepare for the Year 8 exams?

8. What is your hope or aim for your Year 8 students?

9. From your perspective - write down what you think are the good things about having a Year 8 exam.

Good things for teacher – teaching - education in Samoa etc.

Good things for students and student learning

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-
10. From your perspective - write down what you think are the not so good things about having a Year 8 exam?

*Not so good things for the teacher – school - education in Samoa.*

*Not so good things for the students and student learning*

Other

11. The Department of Education has talked about stopping the Year 8 exam? What do you think? *Circle the best answer.*

*It’s good to stop the Year 8 exam.  It’s good to keep the Year 8 exam.  I’m not sure.*
12. Why do you think that?

If you have any other comments that you wish to make, please feel welcome to write them down.

If you want any more information about this study or would like to talk more about the topic you can contact me at 26802.

Faafetai tele lava

Janet Pereira
Appendix ix: Interview guide for Year 8 Teachers re Year 8 National Exam

Year 8 Teacher Interviews 1-1

1. Introduction

2. General questions

*How many years have you been teaching in Year 8?*
E fia tausaga ua e faiaoga ai i le Year 8?

*How many years have you been teaching?*
E fia tausaga ua e faiaoga ai?

*How many Year 8 students do you have in your class?*
E toa fia le aofai o tamaiti aoga i lau vasega?

Tell me about teaching at the Year 8 level. What is it like? .... How do you feel about it?
Se'i fai mai sau faamatalaga e uiga i lau galuega faafiaoga i le Vasega 8?
O le a sou lagona i lau galuega faafiaoga i le Vasega Valu?

3. Go through questions 5-13 in Year 8 Teacher Questionnaire

4. Supplementary interview questions/prompts (Insert when appropriate in response to answers given to questions 5-13 Year 8 Teacher Questionnaire.)

In what way might the Year 8 exam affect how a teacher teaches (teaching methods)?
E faapefea ona aafia lou aoaoina atu (teaching methods) ona o le suega a le Vasega 8?

In what way might the Year 8 exam affect what (eg. the curriculum) is taught?
Narrowing of curriculum/revisiting areas rather than exploring new areas
E faapefea ona aafia le polokalame mo mataupu tau aoga talu ai le suega a le Vasega 8?

Some teachers feel that the Year 8 exam discourages weak students? What do you think?
E faapea isi faiaoga, o le suega a le Vasega 8 e avea lea ma mea e faavaivai ai loto o tamaiti vaivai. O le a sou manatu?

There is a belief that some Year 8 teachers focus on the good students and ignore the weak students in their class. What do you think?
E i ai le talitonuga, o isi faiaoga e alu lava o latou taimi ma mafau fa mo tamaiti atamamai, ae le ano i le vaega vaivai? O le a sou manatu?
Prompts: E tupu? E le tupu? O le a sou lagona i lenei mea?

Thinking about your weak students, what are the hardest things for them about the year 8 exam?
O a ni mea pito sili ona faigata mo tamaiti vaivai pe a fai ai le suega mo le tausaga 8?

Some teachers feel that many students marks in Maths, Science and Social Studies are low because their English is weak? What do you think?

---

1 This interview guide is included as an example of an interview guide used in this research. The interview guide for rural and urban students, parents and teachers was considerably longer and covered a wide range of areas relating to teaching, learning and the student-teacher relationship. Questions were not restricted to interview guides.
Prompt – How does poor English affect the marks of weak students?
Would it be fairer if students could sit Maths, Science and Social studies in Samoan?
Some people think that Year 8 students in Apia get better marks than students from village schools. Why might Apia students get better marks?
Some teachers think that if you don’t have Year 8 exam, teachers will stop working hard and become lazy in their work. What do you think?
Some people also think that if you don’t have Year 8 exams students will stop working hard. What do you think?
Every year people complain about faafetauli and faaletonu in the Year 8 exam. Please give me several examples of this.
What can be done to stop the exam leaking?
What can be done to solve supervision problems?
General question – Are there any other areas that you want to talk about - re Yr 8 exam?
### Appendix x: Example of tracking sheet - How students used their time in class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Record at 5 min intervals for 50 min</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole class – listening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indiv - active task (eg reading/writing)</td>
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<td>Pair work</td>
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<td>Group work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whole class active – class resp. in unison/reading in unison/QA sequences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>
Appendix xi: Example of tracking sheet - How teachers used their time in class

How teachers used their time in the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Class Subject</th>
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<th>10-15</th>
<th>15-20</th>
<th>20-25</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>35-40</th>
<th>40-45</th>
<th>45-50</th>
<th>50-55</th>
<th>55-60</th>
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<td>At board – teaching</td>
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<td>Giving instr to whole class</td>
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<td>1-1 interacting with student at st desk</td>
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<td>Roving – not interacting</td>
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<td>Not in room</td>
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<td>With small group - interacting</td>
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<td>At desk – reading/paper work</td>
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Notes
Manuia o Matua

Faitau ia malamalama ma talanoa i ai.

1. O mea lelei 'uma 'ia mātau ma fa'aaogā,  
O le a'oa'oga sili lenā.  
Mai mātau pe mai fāā'o'ga,  
So'o se mea, o a'oa'oga.  
'Ae 'ā 'aumai i faife'au,  
O a'oa'oga Fa'aleatua na, e fa'avavau

2. O le a'oa'oga le usit,i,  
Tō'aga e uma'i.  
O le a'oa'oga le fa'amāoni,  
Fai ia moni.  
O le a'oa'oga le alofa,  
Teuteu ma fa'aolaola.

3. O le a'oa'oga le loto maualalo,  
Tūmau i le tatalo.  
O le a'oa'oga le agalelei atu,  
Fa'aoso fiafia i manatu.  
O le a'oa'oga fo'i le loto fesoasoani.  
Iēsū Keriso le fa'ata'ita'iga mo le lalolagi.
Fieldwork and Reciprocation in Samoa

Notes made in response to a request for feedback on reciprocation during fieldwork

Over the last three years I travelled to Samoa several times to carry out research as a Ph.D student. The research involved interviewing students, parents and teachers in a rural and semi-urban primary school. I also spent time in classrooms in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between what happens in schools and the wider cultural context. One of the issues facing a researcher is how can you best thank the various individuals and groups of people who contributed to the research. This challenge is especially important in Samoa where reciprocation is a core cultural value and given the financially privileged status of being a New Zealand-based researcher. In Samoa reciprocation was expensive, multiple and involved considerable investment of time and energy.

Firstly there was reciprocation to the host. Sometimes people assume staying with relations is cheap. Wrong! Not in the faaSamoan way. Aside from arriving with food gifts (salmon, scallops, mussels and chocolate), presents, children's clothes and books for host family and continuing to contribute food whilst living with family, there were also faalavelave - important events (i.e. occasions where you help out!).

On a two-week conference trip this involved a church opening in the village of my mother-in-law's cousin ($S 100), a court case over a family matai - chief title ($S200), monetary gifts to mother-in-law ($S200) (subsequently spent on faalavelave and church donations), stepmother-in-law ($S100), an aunty (food and $S50), and a funeral ($S800) a week after returning.

Then there is reciprocation at the school level. Again this took many forms. For each interviewed child I gave a set of 24 coloured pencils or felts (the first for most!) and a pad. For each adult I gave a monetary gift (i.e. a culturally appropriate gift). This was broken into a $S10 mealofa - gift and $S5 pasese - fare. (The term pasese literally means fare but is used colloquially as a way to make it easier for the recipient to accept the gift.) One rural participant wept when I gave him $S15 (i.e. equivalent to one day's wage for a labourer) at the end of a two-hour interview, saying that the money would enable him to bus into Apia to uplift a carton of food and clothing from customs. At the school level, I frequently took food items (e.g. a cake for morning tea or a tin of corned beef for lunch - approx. $S20 - 30 each). I also made an effort to know when there were school faalavelave - important events (e.g. hosting a guest, farewelling a staff member etc.) and/or personal faalavelave (e.g. funeral) and financially contribute. Sometimes reciprocation involved small ordinary everyday acts, like giving rural teachers a ride into town and detouring to take someone to the hospital.

A wonderful opportunity for reciprocation arose out of the desperate need for quality books. Existing material was dated, worn and often inappropriate in content. This material was aptly described by one teacher as "O lapisi ua aumai mai faf" (Rubbish that has been brought to us from overseas). Over two visits I delivered to participating schools nine apple cartons of new or nearly new readers, junior journals and picture books. These were bought, scrounged and gifted. Soft-covered books were covered and strengthened (an enormously time-consuming exercise). Finally boxes where personally delivered to Lyttleton wharf (a two-day trip) and taken courtesy of the Pacific Forum Line, Fiji IT Master to Samoa.

There was also the issue of how do I share my research back to the participants and how can I ensure that my research is of value, encourages debate, further research and leads to change. I found a number of ways to do this. Firstly, during the course of researching and writing the
PhD, I presented papers on three different occasions in Samoa. This was not only an important form of reciprocation but provided a critical validity check. Was I on the right track? What did people **grounded in education in Samoa** think about my work? Secondly, I wrote several papers specifically for research participants, ensuring that they were in accessible language. Thirdly, I distributed all papers relating to the research (six to date) to a variety of audiences in Samoa (i.e. MESC staff, teacher educators, interested principals and teachers, key organisations providing educational aid and libraries).

I also tried to make the interview process as reciprocal as possible. During the introduction, I explicitly stated that interviewees were welcome to ask questions. Almost all took advantage of this offer. Questions ranged from general inquiries about our family (e.g. what our adult children do) to personal questions (what was my philosophy on hitting children? Did we hit our children? etc.). Sometimes parents sought advice on a matter (e.g. an urban mother wanted to know how she could improve her education to better assist her children in their learning.) Almost all teachers asked questions relating to aspects of teaching (e.g. several teachers wanted to know why New Zealand school reports didn't include student's place in class, etc.). Finally, some teachers sought advice or assistance with professional matters (e.g. assistance with postgraduate assignments, career directions etc.). In summary, reciprocation was time-consuming and costly, but absolutely worthwhile. It was but a small thank you to a range of people who gave generously of their time, energy and thoughts.