O le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi: O a`oa'oga maoa`e ma lona a`oa`oina i a'oga amata a le Pasifika

Early literacy: Quality teaching and learning in Pasifika early childhood education

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Acknowledgements

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Executive summary

There are few reported studies of teaching and learning in Pasifika bicultural and immersion early childhood centres. The research reported here is of a one-year action research project aimed at encouraging and strengthening children's Samoan language and literacy learning within an a'oga amata. The study explored the beliefs teachers held about language acquisition and early literacy, the action research process, and the changes that occurred in the teachers' pedagogical practice over the course of the year.

Data was collected in two phases in September 2005 and July 2006, through interviews with teachers about their beliefs and practices, group discussions with parents about their aspirations for children and views of the a'oga amata, videotaped learning episodes focused on literacy experiences, ratings of process quality, and observations and field notes made by the professional development facilitator and researcher.

The main approaches to making pedagogical change to strengthen language and literacy learning were through:

- developing an environment saturated in the language and symbols of Samoan culture
- analysing and adding to ways in which teachers interacted with children so that there was greater capacity for teachers to respond to children's ideas and interests, and for children to express themselves in Samoan and English.

A particular challenge for the teachers in the a'oga amata is the paradigm shift they are making in terms of the constructs of teaching and learning necessitated by working within two languages, and across two cultural contexts.

Professional development processes that were especially successful in helping teachers learn were discussion of videotaped episodes of literacy experiences from within the a'oga amata setting, and access to a range of views including from each other, the professional development facilitator, and the researcher. A further factor for success was the opportunity for the teachers to discuss concepts and their practice using Samoan language and from the basis of their own cultural values.

The findings of this study indicate that action research supported by professional development and research was a fruitful approach to building the quality of the literacy environment and interactions in a Pasifika centre. It would seem to be helpful for such opportunities to be accessible to all teachers in Pasifika centres.

1. Introduction

This is the story of an action research project within one a'oga amata (Samoan early childhood centre) as it unfolded over the course of 12 months in 2005 and 2006. The focus of the project was the interactions between teachers and children that promote and develop early literacy experiences within a bilingual early childhood setting where the main language used is the Samoan language (Gagana Samoa). The project aimed to help teachers to provide reciprocal, responsive relationships and interactions with children around story reading or sharing stories, and "playing" with all kinds of language forms and vocabulary. It also aimed to encourage teachers to respond to what the children already knew and what they wanted to know.

Rationale for the study

Pasifika early childhood education centres and groups have grown rapidly over the past 30 years and face challenges in the ongoing provision of quality education and care. The first Pasifika early childhood group was established in 1972. There are now 113 licence-exempt centres and 91 licensed centres[1] (Ministry of Education, 2005). Outside agencies, mainly the Ministry of Education and professional development providers, have supported these centres in terms of management, and helped maintain sustainability of service provision. In comparison, however, support for curriculum, programme planning, evaluation, self-review, and professional development support, particularly in the teaching and learning about early literacy development in an immersion or bilingual setting, has been less consistent (Mara, 2005; Meade, Puhipuhi, & Foster-Cohen, 2003). In their report, Meade and colleagues (2003, pages not numbered) concluded:

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[1] *Funding*. Licensed and chartered services receive government bulk funding, and may be eligible for Equity Funding, discretionary grants, and MSD childcare subsidies. Licence-exempt services receive limited government funding.

Curriculum. Licensed and chartered services operate under the Education (Early Childhood Education) Regulations and follow the Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs). They are required to plan, implement, and evaluate the curriculum based on the principles, strands, and goals of *Te Whāriki*. Licence-exempt groups have minimal requirements for education programme provision, and health and safety. They are not required to follow the DOPs and do not base their programme on *Te Whāriki*.

ERO reviews. Licensed services are subject to Education Review Office reviews; licence-exempt services are not.

Systems such as charter guidelines don't steer PECCs [Pasifika Education and Care Centres] to focus on their language's vision in their philosophy, and policies and procedures… Professional development resources are being diverted towards strengthening administration and management possibly at the expense of strengthening teaching practice. A focus on implementing *Te Whāriki* effectively seems to slip down the priority list. A focus on maintaining and developing children's proficiency in their Pasifika language/s was not even visible.

Meade et al.'s report (2003) also included the results of a consultation and scoping exercise about priorities for Pasifika early childhood education research and two topics were raised over and again by the participants at each fono. The first was a need for research which described and evaluated the language/s experiences of Pasifika young children in a range of settings, and the second was a need to research the quality of Pasifika early childhood services, including the quality of their language experiences. They reported a need for more centre-based research about the development of early literacy skills in the Samoan language and the learning opportunities teachers provide for that development.

Our research project goes some way in addressing this need and provides some insights into how teachers can work together to strengthen children's early literacy skills within an a'oga amata setting. It describes one approach to developing quality teaching and learning within an a'oga amata that could have wider implications for other Pasifika early childhood services.

The a'oga amata in this study was established primarily to foster and maintain families' Samoan language and culture, in line with other Pasifika early childhood services in Aotearoa New Zealand. Currently, all a'oga amata provide language immersion services but they do so with varying proportions of English and Samoan language being spoken by the children and teachers. Variability exists regarding when, how, and by whom Samoan language is used. Centre-based research such as this study and that being carried out as part the Centre of Innovation (COI) initiative at the Fa'a Samoa A'oga Amata at Richmond Road, Auckland (Meade, 2005; Podmore, Wendt Samu, & the A'oga Fa'a Samoa, 2006) is helping to build up an evidence-based picture of Samoan early childhood immersion provisions.

During the early childhood years, language development and literacy learning proceed rapidly and centres catering for young children can have a positive influence in that development. Therefore the role of the teachers within the a'oga amata in providing quality experiences for their children is crucial in developing these early literacy skills. Teachers must also work to meet parental expectations for their children maintaining Samoan language and cultural identity, whilst at the same time, providing a sound basis for later academic success in their primary and secondary education in English.

Alignment with early childhood education policy and curriculum documents

This project is timely and aligns with present policy, curriculum developments, and research in the early childhood education sector, particularly within Pasifika education. These related developments include the following:

Pathways to the Future: He huarahi arataki (Ministry of Education, 2002*)* sets out a strategic plan for early childhood education and promotes a strategy of effective delivery of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood education curriculum. It identifies the need for more research on ways to better support Pasifika languages, immersion, and bilingual services, and the need to develop policies to maintain and enhance quality in these services. The strategic plan also includes the goal of strengthening collaborative relationships between early childhood education services and Pasifika communities.

The early childhood education goals outlined in *The Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2001) and the *Pasifika Education Plan 2006—2010* (Ministry of Education, 2006) focus on increasing participation and quality in Pasifika early childhood services, including providing additional support to these services to enhance quality and to encourage early literacy. Our study provides some indication of the types of professional support that may be helpful.

The two curriculum documents which guide the provision of quality programmes and good practice are *Te Whāriki. Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) and *Ta'iala mo le Gagana Samoa I Niu Sila. The Samoan Language Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1996a). The Early Childhood Curriculum Strand 4 of *Te Whāriki:* "Communication" (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 16) is most relevant to this study. The Communications strand describes the goals of children experiencing an environment where they develop nonverbal and verbal communication skills for a range of purposes; where they experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures; and where they discover different ways to be creative and expressive. In our study the focus is on print-based and verbal literacy experiences, including stories and symbols of the Samoan culture, and creative and expressive play.

In the *Ta'iala mo le Gagana Samoa I Niu Sila. The Samoan Language Curriculum Framework* the strands within the early childhood level are linked to *Te Whāriki* and describe the learning themes that are common to oral, written, visual, and cultural language learning in Gagana Samoa. Strategies for teachers are also found in: *Developing Programmes for Teaching Pacific Islands Languages* (Ministry of Education, 2000). Pages 55–62 of that booklet provide a useful curriculum model for early childhood services. In particular, there are suggestions for developmentally appropriate activities that involve language learning in real, communicative contexts such as using literacy materials in make-believe and play situations.

This project also fits well within the current research work of NZCER in early childhood education. Pasifika case studies form part of the sample of services in the following projects: *An Evaluation of the Initial Uses and Impact of Equity Funding* (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2006a); *Quality in Parent/Whānau-led Services* (Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara,

D., & Wylie, C., 2006b); and *Locality Based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future—Ngā Huarahi Arataki. Phase 1* (Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara, D., & Wylie, C. (forthcoming). Where relevant, findings from these projects are compared with findings from this study.

The research question

The overarching research question that shaped our study was:

How can we encourage and strengthen children's Samoan language and literacy learning within the a'oga amata?

In order to respond to this question the action research project took a two-fold approach:

- extending teachers' ideas about language acquisition and early literacy using the medium of Samoan language
- using an action research cycle to help teachers focus on encouraging and strengthening children's language and literacy learning.

Layout of report

Chapter 1 introduces the study and the rationale for it. Chapter 2 examines relevant literature and research that places the study in context. In Chapter 3, the methodology, including a description of the setting, the participants, data collection, and analysis processes, is outlined. Chapter 4 describes the baseline phase of the study, including an analysis of the data collected. Chapter 5 discusses the teachers' reflections on the data that helped us plan the action phase, and explains what the teachers' did within the action phase and the nature of the professional development they received. In Chapter 6, the evaluation phase is discussed. This includes examination of data about changes in the nature of Samoan language use, teacher–child interactions, the print environment, and teachers' knowledge and ideas about literacy. Parent views and teacher reflections on the impact of the professional development are also discussed. Chapter 7 brings together the findings and returns to the overall research question. Caveats and recommendations for future action research, including strategies that may assist teachers in a'oga amata and other Pasifika early childhood education services to enhance early literacy experiences, are included.

2. The study in context

In preparation for the study we examined relevant research that would help us focus on early literacy in an early childhood immersion or bilingual setting. We discuss how this action research project compares with other research in the field and how we used the research to provide a shared background for the teachers, researchers, and professional development facilitators engaged in this project. We also consider the implications of the cited research.

Looking at the literature

In the initial stages of the project we undertook a small-scale literature review in the areas of:

- early childhood bilingual education and immersion programmes within Aotearoa New Zealand)
- early literacy development and language learning (particularly studies within Pacific communities).

The literature proved very useful in providing a background to the study and insights into adult–child interactions, particularly within Samoan and Tongan contexts. We used this literature to help situate our study along with two studies that included Pasifika early childhood centres.

Bilingual education and immersion programmes

According to May, Hill, and Tiakiwai (2004, p. 57), any analysis of bilingualism must always take into account the wider social and political context in which it is situated and in Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoan and other Pacific languages are minority languages not only in numerical terms but also in terms of their power, influence, and prestige. Educational programmes aimed at maintaining minority languages take place within this wider context. From a review of international and New Zealand research literature, these authors developed a comprehensive report on indicators of good practice in bilingual/immersion education as they relate to the New Zealand context. In terms of the promotion of "additive" (beneficial and worthwhile) and long-term bilingual/immersion programmes, one of these indicators was that a 50 percent level of immersion is the minimum level of immersion for an effective programme. In Pacific communities, language is important for the maintenance of cultural identity. A group's own language acts as a repository of cultural value systems and knowledge.

May and colleagues found that most of the earlier literature in the area of bilingualism and immersion education either took a deficit approach[2], or saw bilingualism only as a route to eventual assimilation including adoption of, or fluency in, the majority language by bilingual speakers. They pointed out that, although research in the area of bilingual education has moved on, deficit thinking about the value of bilingualism still has some traction in the wider New Zealand society. In New Zealand, the setting up of Pacific language playgroups and early childhood centres has created contexts within which Pacific languages can be maintained and passed on. A key issue in early childhood bilingual education concerns the relative use and importance of the home language (in our research, Samoan) and the use of the majority language, English. One aim of our research was to find out more about when and how the Samoan language is used in interactions between adults and children and in early childhood resources in one a'oga amata.

A study by Tanielu (2004) on the A'oga a le Faifeau (Pastor schools) in Samoa and New Zealand, showed how the Pastor schools have pedagogically influenced a'oga amata. She argued that the types of literacy skills such as oracy, memorisation, and cultural literacy developed within the Pastor school (and consequently a'oga amata), need to be more fully appreciated and built upon within the primary school curriculum in New Zealand. Research that builds up evidence about language interactions within the a'oga amata, and demonstrates how early literacy is developed at the early childhood level, may help, she claims, to strengthen such links.

Early literacy in Pasifika early childhood education

Narrative interaction between adults and children and the extent to which children initiate interactions reveal whether and how children are engaging in early literacy experiences and how they are gaining meaning and understanding. We felt that analysing such data would provide some insights into children's thinking and communicating, because these kinds of interactions are important to children's literacy development.

A study that contributed to our initial thinking was by Tagoilelagi (1995), who observed reading interactions within 18 Samoan families both in homes in Samoa and in New Zealand. She developed and measured six types of routines (interactions) between parents and children, as they read familiar and unfamiliar texts together. She identified these routines as:

• Tauloto/Performance (parent reads, child reads text modelled by adult)
• Narrative Question (including elaboration of meaning, shared experiences, memories)
• Reading (interaction starts with reading of text, followed by questioning by the parent)
• Display Question (questions posed about meanings of a diagram, picture within the text)
• Tag Question (to focus attention of child).

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[2] Deficit approach considers the use of languages other than English to be confusing for the learner and of less value than English. As a consequence, the speakers of other languages are therefore seen as less intelligent, learn more slowly than English speakers, and are more difficult to teach.

- Child Initiating Routines.[3]

She found little or no evidence of Narrative Question and Child Initiating Routines (although there were fractionally more of the latter in New Zealand families). All parents used a variety of the other observed routines in the parent–child interactions, with both familiar and unfamiliar texts. Her findings of the absence of narrative questions and child initiation in these exchanges were endorsed by the findings of Wolfgramm, McNaughton, and Afeaki (1997).

In their smaller study, Wolfgramm et al. (1997) found that when they developed a 30-minute educational programme for parents in a Tongan language group to extend and add to their strategies as they read stories to their children, six of the seven families added an additional "collaborative participation" style to their reading practices. The researchers used a range of measures to describe different aspects of the children's reading expertise both before and after the parent training programme was completed. Exchanges between adult reader and child were analysed and it was found that, before the educational intervention, two styles were mainly used:

- Performance exchanges (where the child would repeat what the adult read, in response to the adult's pause)
- Display exchanges (where the child was required to label parts of an illustration, letters, or words in a text).

These families traditionally used a "performance-directed style" in literacy events such as in family devotions and verse memorisation. These early literacy approaches are important in terms of cultural practices, church activities, and socialisation. However, the literacy skills constructed by performance methods are not widely made use of by schools as literacy "expertise". According to the researchers, schools do need to recognise the expertise in recitation memory these children bring.

After the educational programme, a third style was added:

- Narrative exchanges (where the adult and child explored story meanings and conversations).

The families that incorporated "narrative exchanges" (that is, talking about story meanings), when reading storybooks with their children, were more likely to have children who entered school with the conventional classroom literacy knowledge and language skills valued by schools. The authors claim both approaches are important to early literacy development for the group of Tongan children in their study.

The researchers also looked at child-initiated responses in terms of "immediate talk" (that is, interaction that centred on the text in front of the child and the adult reader), and "nonimmediate talk" (talk that moves away from what can be seen on the page and includes requests for thoughts about characters in the story, vocabulary, and connections between the story and the child's own world). Talking in this way also links to progress in reading on entry to school. Significant

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[3] The six categories have full descriptors in Tagoilelagi (1995, pp. 45–63).

positive effects on children's learning were found following the story-reading intervention programme provided to parents. Where children were read to using a collaborative approach, their engagement in nonimmediate talk increased and their initiation of conversation also increased.

In her Masters thesis, Burgess (2004) looked at the print experiences offered to Samoan children in three a'oga amata and three kindergartens. She observed children's experiences with print, and the types of print items accessible to children in terms of their diversity, which she said "is considered a key aspect of quality, ensuring variety, choice and interest for the children" (Burgess, 2004, p. ii). She classified types of print items found in each centre according to genre (book and print), print form, level of print, and the language of the texts (Samoan, English, Māori). Teachers were shown the classification and were subsequently involved in the text classification process. After the first visit to each centre she found that a'oga amata had fewer print items accessible to children than kindergartens, but by the third visit the difference had reduced. The centres did, however, have a higher balance of Samoan language items than kindergartens. Burgess suggests that both services need to pay attention to the diversity of print accessible to children to meet the expectation of *Te Whāriki* that children experience the stories and symbols of their own culture.

Burgess observed and recorded the number and nature of initiatives taken by the children in the six centres in the use of, or engagement with, print items. She observed interactions within a three-hour session in each centre. The types of uses of print were classified into four child-initiated types of use, and one adult-initiated use. These were:

- child initiates with books, wall displays that may involve another child or an adult
- child requests a teacher or adult to provide a print experience
- child selects play experience involving print experience including pretend play
- child's art work or early writing forms the basis of the print experience and interaction with teacher
- teacher initiates sharing story reading or lesson, with larger group, using charts, poems.

Burgess found that:

> About a third of the print experiences across each centre and service type were teacher initiated programmed experiences, while two thirds were child initiated and associated with free play. Child initiated print experiences still depend on appropriate support from a teacher or parent. (2004, pp. 67–68)

For both a'oga amata and kindergartens, over half of the print experiences involved storybooks. However, print experiences with wall charts were relatively more important for a'oga amata, allowing them to compensate for the lesser number of books available for children.

Sixty percent of the print experiences in a'oga amata were in the Samoan language. The remainder were evenly divided between English language experiences and experiences involving both Samoan and English. This balance of Samoan and English language experiences is consistent with enabling the bilingual development of Samoan children. This is consistent with May et al.'s

(2004), finding that a minimum of 50 percent language immersion is one factor in enabling programmes to be effective.

Burgess found 40 percent of Samoan books and 33 percent of other Samoan print resources formed the print environment of a'oga amata. In her conclusion, Burgess (2004) proposed:

> There was also scope for action research studies with smaller numbers of a'oga amata in different areas of New Zealand to provide further findings about the quality of the print and literacy teaching and learning environments, and the related communication experiences. Kindergartens could similarly support action research that evaluates the social and cultural backgrounds that Samoan children bring to the kindergarten. Action research could also investigate how teachers can build on those backgrounds in the print environment and communication experiences in the kindergarten. (p. 71)

This study, along with the recommendations for further research, was a useful building block for our study.

Case studies in Pasifika centres

Two recent New Zealand early childhood education projects (Mitchell et al., 2006a, b), which included case studies in Pasifika early childhood education and care centres, including a'oga amata, also inform this study. Of particular importance is the perspective of the parents. Pacific families had a range of needs and aspirations for their children, that were somewhat wider than those of other parents. They had a strong desire for parents and teachers in Pasifika services to support their cultures and maintain their heritage languages. Parents wanted early childhood outcomes, especially learning and socialisation opportunities and preparation for school. Parents and families expected that the programmes within the a'oga amata would not only assist their children in retaining their Samoan language and culture, but also provide them with English. They regarded English as important in helping children achieve at subsequent levels of the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is within the context of these wide-ranging expectations from Pacific parents and communities that centres such as the a'oga amata in this study operate.

In the *Quality in Parent/Whānau-led Services* study (Mitchell et al., 2006b, p. 56), the Pasifika centres that were strongest in supporting language and culture were immersion centres, while those that were less strong were bilingual or multilingual. This endorses the research by May and colleagues (2004) mentioned earlier. The strong Pasifika centres had a higher level of fluent community language speakers and implemented the programme in their own community language. Strong centres also tended to have smaller group sizes and slightly higher adult:child ratios and had a higher average level of parent educators' early childhood education experience.

In relation to this study, these findings suggest that levels of teacher fluency in Samoan and amount of communication in Samoan will be key factors in supporting language and culture.

Summary

The literature review highlighted the literacy practices commonly used by families from Pacific cultures, which showed the influence of historical teaching practices Pacific parents have adopted, as well as practices informed by cultural and church traditions. We were reminded of the need for interpreting any findings in terms of the cultural context of the a'oga amata and with regard to some of these traditional ways of learning and teaching within Samoan contexts. For example, levels of respect that may mitigate against children being encouraged to question or verbalise their thoughts to adults, or, the close adult care that surrounds very young children that may prevent them from exploring, making mistakes, and following individual or unanticipated interests and activities uninterrupted. Some of these practices differ philosophically and pedagogically from the literacy interactions endorsed by the Communications strand in *Te Whāriki*. Our research project takes this background knowledge into consideration and attempts to build on this by providing professional development to the teachers in one a'oga amata using an action research approach.

3. Methodology

A collaborative process

This was a collaborative action research project. The following set of circumstances provided a sound basis for collaboration: as researchers we were invited to work with an a'oga amata committed to change; the a'oga amata was committed to staff being trained and becoming fully qualified; and the research project was fully supported by the management board. Through previous projects and involvements with the a'oga amata, the researchers were already known to the supervisor and staff. This level of familiarity assisted in the formation of working relationships and in the building of trust and confidence in the research process.

Effective collaboration depends upon establishing and maintaining positive relationships. To confirm our commitment to the project and to each other an agreement was drawn up to include all parties: the a'oga amata; the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER); and the Victoria University of Wellington College of Education. Consistent with *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt Samu, & Finau, 2001) this project was also a collaboration between Pacific researchers, Samoan early childhood teachers, palagi project sponsors, and mentors from each of the above institutions.

The context of the a'oga amata

The A'oga Amata Porirua Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS) in this study provides education and care within a bilingual Samoan context. The a'oga amata's policy handbook states that it has a commitment to providing good early childhood education in the Samoan language and culture to Samoan children and their families and to others who choose to educate their children in Samoan.

It is situated within a wider church complex comprising the main church building, two church halls, tennis courts, and newly renovated two-storey early childhood centre premises. It provides separate over-two and under-two areas that link into a central dining, kitchen, and entrance area. The outdoor space is large, divided into under- and over-two areas on gently sloping ground with a sandpit and other large outdoor equipment in each of the areas. On the verandahs there is a range of activities and equipment provided for the children including large blackboards to write and draw on, water troughs, art activities, hoops, balls, and so on. The a'oga is well resourced

with a wide range of equipment and spacious indoor-outdoor areas. There are two rooms for the over-two children. The upstairs room is for the older children (mostly four-year-olds who are transitioning to school); the lower level has the two- and three-year-olds although at times during the day the two groups play together. There are four teachers and 32 children altogether in the over-twos area.

Action research and professional development

An action research process was followed. Carr and Kemmis (1986) define action research as:

> A form of reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which practices are carried out. (p. 162)

Action research involves working with others through spirals of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In this study, systematic observation and collection of data was necessary to record what was currently occurring within the centre in relation to the overall research question. Teachers already had views about what was happening in their a'oga amata but analysis of the data allowed teachers to examine the situation and consider whether these perceptions were indeed the reality.

Before embarking on data collection it was important for all participants to gain a shared understanding of action research processes. An action research workshop was held with the a'oga amata teachers in which we discussed the research methods to be used in the study, and the notion of action research spirals. During the workshop we agreed to determine the actual focus of our action research after the data collection phase. The evidence gathered in this phase would be discussed and used to decide:

- What specific aspects of literacy should we focus on in this study?
- What can we do better?
- How do we do this?

It was intended that a developmental action research approach (Cardno, 2003) would help us to answer these preliminary questions and in the action phase teachers would be assisted, through appropriate needs-based professional development, to make changes.

An identified need for Pasifika early childhood services is to access support provided by appropriate Pacific professional development facilitators (Mitchell et al., 2006b). A unique feature of this study was that the teachers could discuss their ideas, insights, understanding, and practice using their Samoan language and receiving support from a Samoan professional development facilitator at all stages of the action research process. In this instance the a'oga amata had support from, and access to, Feaua'i Burgess, who is a fluent speaker of Samoan.

This study had a further aim: to build up practitioner capability in terms of reflective practice and research skills. It would support parents to work in partnership with teachers and the community to enhance children's learning. It would build on the present strengths, knowledge, and skills of all participants: teachers; parents; the community of the a'oga amata; and the researchers. The approach taken in this study was consistent with the *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (Anae et al., 2001).

Participants

The study was carried out in collaboration with the supervisor and three teachers working with the children in the over-two area. The supervisor was a qualified registered teacher, holding a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education). Two of the three other teaching staff members were, at the time of the study, in training and near completion of their Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education).

The parents and caregivers of the 32 children in the over-twos area were all invited to take part in focus group discussions. Nine parents participated in these discussions at the beginning of the project, and 14 participated at the end of the project.

Children were Samoan, or of Samoan/Māori, Samoan/Niuean, Samoan/Cook Islands, or Samoan/New Zealand Pākehā ethnicity. About half the children came from homes where Samoan was spoken fluently and was the main language spoken. English and Samoan were both spoken in other homes. The parents who attended the discussion groups were asked questions about their child's fluency in Samoan. About 50 percent reported that their children could speak in Samoan using sentences and/or words whilst another 25 percent said their children had some understanding of Samoan even if they did not speak it.

The licensee and management of the centre were kept informed of the research as it progressed.

Data collection and analysis

The aims of the data collection were to gather sufficient information about the a'oga amata from the perspectives of parents and teachers, and from video recordings and observations to:

• provide a description of the a'oga amata over the course of the year
• analyse changes in practice
• highlight issues and challenges.

Data was collected at two stages of the study: at the baseline phase in November 2005 and at the end of the action phase in July 2006. The teachers discussed the baseline data with the professional development facilitator and the researcher. As a consequence, the teachers determined the focus of early literacy during the subsequent action phase.

The following instruments were used in this study to collect the data: interviews; observations; discussion groups; videotaping; a process quality rating scale; and digital photographs. The nature and purpose of each in relation to this study are described below.

Interviews

Teachers were interviewed at the start of the project about their current knowledge, and approaches to teaching and learning of Samoan language and fostering literacy development in the a'oga amata. At the end of the project, the interviews were about teachers' views of changes in their beliefs, knowledge, and teaching and learning practice. Interview questions are included in Appendix A.

We carried out individual interviews because it was easier for the a'oga amata's programme to withdraw the teachers one by one. We thought individual interviews would allow all four teachers to express themselves, rather than relying on the supervisor or one teacher within a group situation to answer all the questions on behalf of everyone. The interviews were carried out by both researchers using Samoan and English, whatever was most comfortable for the teacher. The interviews were taperecorded and written notes were also taken of the teachers' responses.

The four interview scripts were then analysed for common themes.

Observations

On each visit, the professional development facilitator and researcher took observational field notes on the nature of the print environment, interactions between adults and children and among children, and child-initiated literacy activities. In the baseline phase, this supplemented the videos and photographs; in the action and evaluation phase, this added to evidence of changes in the nature of interactions and examples of child-initiated and child-sustaining learning episodes.

Parent discussion groups

In the baseline phase, discussion groups were held with parents around early literacy, their expectations in relation to use of Samoan language in the a'oga amata, and the kinds of language activities that their children enjoyed. In the evaluation phase, many of the same parents and some new parents took part in further discussions. They were asked to look back over the year and comment on any changes they noticed to literacy resources, activities, and experiences, and the children's interest in text-based literacy at home and in the a'oga amata. The parent discussion questions are included in Appendix B. The discussions were taperecorded. Whilst one of the fieldworkers took notes, the other facilitated the discussion. At times parents spoke in Samoan language about their ideas and the researchers then changed roles of facilitation and recording to accommodate this situation. Parents' views if given in Samoan were translated by other parents in the group or the researcher who was a fluent Samoan speaker.

Videotaping

To better understand what was happening in the interactions between the teachers and the children around literacy events in the a'oga amata, the researchers videotaped a series of language interactions involving early literacy experiences, incidentally, as they happened. Episodes included reading, writing, singing, looking at books, charts, photographs, and pictures with captions. The researchers followed the children and the teachers during several morning sessions over two weeks at the baseline and final phases. Videotapes of 17 separate learning episodes were made in the baseline phase, and of 12 episodes at the final phase.

The videos were analysed for the kinds of questions teachers were asking to engage the children in discussion and whether teachers were incorporating children's own experiences and interests into the interactions with the children around early literacy. The videotapes were also analysed for whether teachers' questions prompted either simple recall or whether they engaged the children and prompted them to talk and/or initiate interactions.

Process quality rating scale

Ratings of quality were made using the NZCER/TKRNT process quality rating scale. Process quality refers to the environment and interactions and relationships that occur in an early childhood setting and shape children's learning opportunities and experiences. Items are based on theoretical understanding of what constitutes a good quality teaching and learning environment and have been shown in the Competent Children/Competent Learners study[4] to be enduring factors that make a tangible difference to children's later performance. They have been used within other New Zealand contexts, including Pasifika early childhood services (Mitchell et al, 2006a, b; Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, forthcoming), and as a source of data to decide and assess cycles of action research/professional development in the Wilton Playcentre Centre of Innovation work (van Wijk et al., 2006). They are robust and useful measures in pointing to what teachers/educators can do to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

We used 15 items of this scale that were relevant to our focus on literacy, i.e., adult:child interactions that are responsive, cognitively challenging, and support literacy development, the richness of the literacy environment, and children's engagement in literacy activities and learning. The items are outlined in Appendix C.

Diane Mara, one of the researchers, carried out two sets of observations of centre activities, environment, and interactions over two half-days at the start and end of the project, rating the a'oga amata on the items. She is experienced and trained in the use of the scale in Pasifika early childhood centres.

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[4] The methodology for this study, including the development of the rating scale, is described more fully in Wylie (2003). Reports and papers from the Competent Children/Competent Learners study can be found on www.nzcer.org.nz

Use of this scale enabled us to help decide on the focus of action research, make evaluative judgements about levels of quality, and measure change over time for the particular aspects that were rated.

Photographs

We began to take digital photographs from our first visits to the a'oga amata and continued during all phases of the study. We then had a wide selection of photographs recording the "before" and "after" print environment and stages in between. The photographic evidence supported the videotaped and other data collected, and was used for the reflection process for discussions, and to analyse change.

4. Baseline data

What the data showed

(a) The nature of interactions

The video evidence, observations, and the process quality rating scale recorded interactions around early literacy experiences. The evidence showed most interactions were teacher-led and did not allow for the children's own interests to be followed.

The videotaped learning episodes showed that the interactions between the teachers and children were more often teachers interacting with children as one whole group and sometimes with small groups of children. Whole-group "mat times", involving structured teaching, were held three times a day for almost an hour each. Across all of the episodes videotaped, teachers and children were engaged in one-to-one interactions less than 10 percent of the time. Where one-to-one interactions did take place, such as in the sharing of a book between a teacher and a child in the book corner, the teacher was doing most of the talking. She tended to ask questions for information rather than for promoting thinking or responses from the child's own experiences. For example, the following was a typical interaction:

> T: O le igoa o le tatou tusi *O le Pua`a* (Our book is called The Pig.)
>
> T: O a mea a le toeaina la e fai? (What is the old man doing?)

The child in this interaction had little opportunity to talk and share with the teacher, for example, about his grandmother or his elders in response to the story in the book. This type of exchange is similar to the "display" and "performance" exchanges that were found by McNaughton, Wolfgramm, and Afeaki (1996) in their study of parental reading strategies for Tongan pre-schoolers. In the recorded episodes, teachers did not use "narrative" exchanges, which are focused on story meanings and help children develop conventional literacy and language skills.

In another interaction, the teacher asks a question when sharing a book with three children:

> T: O le a le mea a tama lea e fai? (What is the boy doing?)
>
> Ch 1: O le solo, la e fufulu. (It is a towel (he is) washing.)
>
> Ch 2: Solo le tama. (The boy is drying himself.)

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At this point a third child responds by relating the experience to herself:

> Ch 3: E ai lo'u solo ta'ele. Ou te ta'ele lava au. (I have my own towel. I can bath myself.)

This would have been an opportunity for the teacher to engage the children in sharing and discussing their own interests and experiences but this was not developed further by the teacher.

The baseline videotape also included episodes where children were left for long periods (e.g., the boys in the block corner) without adults taking part, providing challenge, or extending the children's experiences. Nor were adults actively participating or asking questions of them to elicit their thoughts, feelings, or interests. These kinds of challenging interactions where adults engage with children's interests and thinking to scaffold and co-construct learning have been found to be associated with better cognitive, social, and dispositional outcomes. In the comprehensive longitudinal *Effective Provision of Preschool Education* study in England, such interactions were found to be more likely to occur with adults working one to one with children and during focused small-group work (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003).

Similar evidence of limited engagement with children's interests and experiences or adult participation in children's play was found in the ratings of process quality. These ratings indicated that the a'oga amata was very well equipped. There was a good variety of resources and activities, both indoors and outdoors. However, children were often left to play solely with peers once the equipment, books, or resources had been made accessible.

Table 1 **Ratings of process quality in 2005**

High ratings—what is described happened most of the time	Average ratings—what is described sometimes happened	Low ratings—what is described hardly ever happened
There are enough age-appropriate toys/books, equipment, and resources to avoid problems of waiting, competing, fighting for scare resources. Children can select their own activities from a variety of learning areas.	Stories are read, told, and shared. There is opportunity for children to "write". Adults encourage/foster children's language development. Adults add complexity and challenge. Children are allowed to complete activities. Children engage in child-initiated creative play.	Adults ask open-ended questions that encourage children to choose their own answers. Adults participate with children in activities and play. Children display purposeful involvement in learning episodes. There is evidence of children's creativity and artwork.

From the observations and the videotape evidence it was clear that it could be valuable for teachers to gain understanding and have support to explore possibilities and opportunities for the children's early literacy learning that can be provided through interactions and resources.

(b) Samoan language use

Before the data analysis, teachers were not sure how much Samoan language (Gagana Samoa) was used in the a'oga amata. They believed that using Gagana Samoa within the a'oga amata was a crucial factor in reinforcing children's cultural identity. For this reason, one teacher argued that the language needed to be "a living language". Another affirmed that parents also wanted Gagana Samoa to be used in the a'oga amata. These teachers wanted to find out how much they used Gagana Samoa in their interactions with children.

Most teachers reported that they reverted to using English when the child looked blankly at them or appeared not to understand. The teachers also said they used English with children who were from ethnically mixed backgrounds, or who had parents who were not fluent in Gagana Samoa.

When the video data was viewed the teachers were surprised because they thought they used more English than the video data revealed. As one of the teachers said:

> I was surprised to find I speak Samoan most of the time, I thought it was less… (Teacher)

Very few and isolated incidences were noted where the teachers were using English with the children across the 17 episodes recorded. However, it may be that the presence of a video camera and the expectation that the research was about the use of Samoan may have played a role in teachers using more Samoan than they thought.

The video data showed that the teachers' use of Samoan included episodes of reading books with children, even when the text was in English, and when teachers were working alongside children during "reading" or "writing" activities. They sometimes used English vocabulary when pointing to a picture or object where they sensed hesitation. This was usually followed up with the Samoan word, which in some instances was also used within a sentence.

In one instance, for example, when a child was cutting out magazine pictures for a collage about clothing, we observed the child use the English word "earring", the teacher repeated the English word, then the Samoan word, and the teacher followed up by a sentence in Samoan placing the object in a context:

> Child (cutting out and pointing to picture in magazine): Earrings!
>
> Teacher: Yes, they're earrings! Ioe, o tautaliga
>
> Child: Earrings! O tautaliaga!
>
> Teacher: Yes, the girl is wearing earrings. Ioe, o le teine la e fai ona O tautaliga!

(c) Print environment

The rating for the item "The a'oga amata is a print-saturated environment" was average. Data gathered in the baseline phase showed that although wall displays were colourful, some were adult-focused in terms of content and theme such as planning charts and scenic paintings. The photographic evidence showed many displays were not at the children's height and the children

could not see them or "read" them easily. Although the ratings were not poor, they could be improved. In addition, the teachers were beginning to make changes since they had just moved into their new premises.

A high rating on this rating scale item signals an environment that is very print-focused and encourages print awareness. Print is visible on a variety of surfaces (e.g., posters, packets, and containers) and is visible at child's eye level. Children are encouraged to explore thoughts, experiences, and ideas using symbols (e.g., print, shapes, words, and photographs). A range of writing materials is readily accessible. The Competent Children/Competent Learners study found that low levels of print awareness and use as an aspect of the study participants' early childhood centre was linked to lower average scores on most cognitive competencies at age 12, and reading comprehension at age 14 (Wylie, Hodgen, Ferral, & Thompson, 2006).

(d) Teachers' knowledge and ideas about early literacy

Teachers were clear about their role in promoting Samoan identity through all the activities in the centre, and especially use of Samoan language.[5]

> E tatau i fanau laiti ona malamalama i le latou lava gagana. E malosi lava lo`u talitonuga e tatau ona iloa e le fanau laiti le latou gagana ma iloa a latou o Samoa.

> Children need to understand their own language. I strongly believe that children need to know and be able to identify themselves. (Teacher 4 interview, 15 November 2005)

> O le a`oa`oina i le aganu`u e taua. O le kukaina o taro (liliu fa`a-saienisi), o le tusia o pese e aofia ai a latou gaioiga masani.

> Cultural learning is important. Cooking, taro (science), songs written to include their experiences. (Teacher 3 interview, 15 November 2005)

Teachers thought that promoting Samoan identity and language was especially important in the case of New Zealand-born parents who wanted their children to retain or in some cases revive the Samoan language, but who did not speak Samoan at home. There were challenges in working with children with different levels of fluency:

> [O nisi fanau laiti] e lelei a latou fa`alogo, ae fa`ale-lelei le tali. E tatau ona fa`aopo`opoina le fa`aleoga ma fa`ata`ita`I pea le tautala. O le faia so`o po`o le fa`alausoso`o e taua.

> [Some children] are good at listening, but very restricted at responding. They need to increase their articulation, and need practice at talking. Repetition is important. (Teacher 4 interview, 15 November 2005)

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[5] Comments from teachers where they spoke in Samoan are directly quoted in Samoan and translated into English. Where the teachers spoke in English, no translation to Samoan is provided.

E tatau ona `ou fa`alototele fanau laiti mai aiga e fefiloi aganu`u a o latou matua. E lelei lava le latou malamalama. Ou te tautala fa`agesegese i fanau laiti, ia ma ou taumafai ou te tali atu iai e tusa ai ma mea o lo`o latou fa`amatala mai ia te a`u.

I need to encourage the children from 'mixed' marriages. Their understanding is good. I speak slowly for 'mixed' children and I respond to what they are trying to tell me. (Teacher 3 interview, 15 November 2005)

E manana`o matua i faia'oga e latou te fa`aaoga pea le gagana Samoa. A`o nisi fanau laiti e omai lava e maualuga tele le gagana fa`a-Peretania, o nisi fo`i e maualuga tele le gagana Samoa.

The parents want the teachers to model Samoan. But some children come in with high English, some with high Samoan. (Teacher 2 interview, 15 November 2005)

Teachers said communication with parents was also a very important part of their role.

The teachers believed that early literacy was largely about reading and writing skills and their role was to teach children how to recognise and to write their own name, learn the Samoan alphabet, be accurate in counting and writing numerals.

They said that, mostly, this teaching occurred in a formal sense within a large group and at times as isolated activities (not necessarily related to children's interests and experiences). Letters and numerals were copied or traced using templates or work sheets. In other words, the teachers believed "performance exchanges" and "display exchanges" to be the most appropriate methods for reading to children and "teaching" letters and numerals. As discussed, these exchanges are valuable in terms of cultural practices, but in addition, "narrative exchanges" are valuable in supporting literacy knowledge and language skills used at school.

Several teachers mentioned that they learnt about early literacy during their early childhood teacher training and "reading of palagi" but were unsure of how this applied in the a'oga amata setting. In effect, the teachers were eager to extend their knowledge about early literacy and were looking forward to receiving professional development that would increase their understanding in the context of Fa'a Samoa (Samoan cultural values and practices).

(e) Parents' views and aspirations

The a'oga amata parents confirmed previous research that shows that Pacific parents have high expectations for their children to be bilingual, using both Samoan and English languages confidently. More specifically, they want their children to read and write in both languages and be proud of their cultural background. The parents were very supportive of the teachers in what they were trying to achieve. All of the parents enjoyed hearing their children singing Samoan songs taught at the centre and the books that were sent home. One parent said her daughter just loved "reading" over and over again. Another parent remarked on the positive effects on family relationships:

Na [le fanau laiti] te a`oa`oina mai matou le gagana. Na te fa`amanatu ma ia`i matou a matou pese.

She [the child] teaches us the language. [She] reminds us of our songs.

Another parent said:

[O faia'oga] latou te fa`alauteleina gagana a le fanau laiti. [Latou te a`oa`oina le fanau laiti] e fa`avi`ivi`i le isi i le isi ma fa`amasani e fa`afetaia`i.

[The teachers] increase children's language. [They teach the children to] compliment each other and thank others.

In addition, some parents noted their child's social skills were being fostered and their cultural identity was being affirmed as a result of being at the a'oga amata and interacting with other children and adults:

Ua latou iloa o latoue ona ia mea.

They know they belong.

[Ia a`oa`oina] ia lotomitamita e tusa ai ma lana aganu`u ma `avea o ia o se tagata malosi, e malamalamai i lona fa`asinomaga.

[She is learning to] be proud of her cultural background and a stronger person, understanding her own background.

Parents were asked if they would like to take part in a second discussion when the action research was completed and they all agreed that they would.

5. Action phase and professional development

Planning the action phase

The teachers identified their own priorities for professional development as a result of considering baseline data with the professional development facilitator and researcher. All teachers participated in a three-hour meeting to discuss video clips, photographs taken in the baseline phase, feedback on ratings of process quality, observational notes, and main themes from parent discussion groups and teacher interviews. Key questions were posed:

- How could the interactions be improved?
- What should happen next?

The videotaping of the teachers, although originally intimidating for teachers, proved to be very effective in helping them reflect on their practice, to see for themselves the need for change and improvement in their practice. For example, when the teacher saw an interaction on the videotape of her questioning a child about the book, *The Pig*, discussed on page 17, she immediately said:

> I did not give him time to speak. I asked him too many questions. I should have waited [for him]… (Teacher)

Such insight was important and immediate for the teacher herself and for her colleagues. Seeing the video raised questions for the teacher about how to encourage children to think for themselves and how to allow the children the time to think and then respond.

The video clips and process quality ratings in the baseline phase showed that children were being left to play together with little adult interaction. When the teachers realised what was happening, they acknowledged this, but were not sure how they could "get around" all the children. The teachers and professional development facilitator discussed how the teachers could improve their interactions with the children through organising to work with small groups of children and individual children. This intensity of interaction is especially important when the teachers are the fluent speakers of Samoan, but the children are less fluent. The teachers can provide good language models and can offer opportunities for children to speak Samoan, to be told and encouraged to share stories in Samoan, and to experience written Samoan text.

Priorities for improvement

The teachers agreed priorities for improvement were to:

- develop early or pre-reading for meaning;
- develop emergent writing for meaning; and
- extend and increase narrative questioning through the medium of Gagana Samoa (the Samoan language).

Interactions

Specifically, it was decided that the teachers would develop and use strategies to enhance the quality of interactions by allowing the children:

- more opportunities to initiate interactions (for example, choose books, stories, posters of poems and songs)
- more "space" within the interactions to contribute
- more opportunities to share in literacy activities with one another
- more opportunities to bring their experiences from home, church, and the wider community into sharing stories, writing, singing, and imaginary play.

The teachers decided to try to get alongside children more often during literacy experiences and interact with them on a one-to-one or small-group basis rather than having the whole group of children sitting on the mat for every reading experience, for example. This would assist the children's learning and early literacy.

Language use

It was agreed that the present levels of Samoan would be maintained since the data had shown teachers were using a high level of Samoan. This was not to be the focus that we had anticipated it would be at the start of the project, since before the baseline data was collected teachers were not satisfied with their Samoan language use. This demonstrates how important it is for teachers to gather data on what actually exists, rather than making assumptions about their behaviour which in this case was Samoan language use.

Environment

Development of the a'oga amata as a print-saturated environment especially in Gagana Samoa was planned. A challenge for the a'oga amata is that most print resources that can be bought are in English. The centre had purchased and accessed what resources they could but developing a print-saturated environment would still entail teachers making Samoan print resources themselves.

Theoretical and pedagogical understanding

It was agreed that the professional development facilitator would offer literature and discussion about possibilities and opportunities for children's early literacy learning within the a'oga amata.

Professional development

The professional development provided to the teachers was based on the needs that teachers, the professional development facilitator, and the researcher identified in the collaborative analysis of the baseline data. It consisted of the professional development facilitator:

- observing teachers during interactions and providing them with specific feedback around the provision of early literacy experiences such as reading to children
- reviewing videotapes of learning episodes and observational data with the teachers and encouraging them to reflect on their own practice
- providing teachers with articles and books relating to literacy and pedagogical content knowledge
- providing clarification of early literacy concepts and approaches by translating these in written and oral form into the Samoan language and discussing concepts with them
- supporting the supervisor in her leadership role
- modelling, supporting, and providing leadership in bilingual literacy practice and throughout the action research process, e.g., modelling the reading of books to children and approaches to engage them in discussion; demonstrating how teachers could encourage discussion with children about wall displays, signs, poetry, etc.

Six visits were made over the action phase period for the above input and support. Many of the points raised during the initial action research workshop were reinforced and the teachers were encouraged to focus on improving their interactions and the print environment on the basis of the baseline data findings.

6. Evaluation phase

At the end of the action phase data was collected in exactly the same way as in the baseline phase and then shared with the teachers. The following sections summarise the findings and the discussions held between the teachers and the researchers.

What the data showed

(a) The nature of interactions

Videotaped evidence, teacher interviews, and the process quality rating scale demonstrated improvements over time:

- Teachers were participating more with the children
- Children were allowed to complete activities and engage in child-initiated play
- Teachers were providing increased opportunities for children to "write"
- Teachers were responding to children's writing and stories.

Teachers reported they had become less directive in their teaching, more relaxed in following children's interests and child-initiated activities, and they were more interested and focused on children's talk and the children's own stories:

> Ua sili atu lo`u to`afilemu a`o ta`a`alo le fanau laiti i poloka, po`o lego. Ua o`u fiafia lava e matamata ma tulimata`i [latou] i lo le fai so`o iai e tusa ai ma mea out e loto iai e tatou ona latou faia. Ua sili atu fo`i lo`u fiafia e fa`alogologo i talatalanoaga a le fanau laiti ma tali atu i a latou fesili e uiga ia latou ta`aloga i mata`itusi fa`atusatusa.

> I am more relaxed with children's playing with the blocks or lego. I am enjoying watching [them] rather than telling them what to do. I am more interested in children's talk relating to their matching letters and I listen and ask for clarification. (Teacher 1 interview, 25 July 2006).

> Ua sili atu fo`i lo`u iloa e iai lava mea fa`apitoa e fiafia iai fanau laiti, a`e le o lo`u fafagaina fa`apepe pea i latou. Ia ou va`ai po`o fea lava e `ave iai le loto o fanau laiti. E mafai e fanau laiti ona ola su`esu`e i ituaiga o mea `ese`ese ia latou ta`aloga masani.

> I am more aware that children have their own interests and not to spoon-feed them. See where the children take you. Children can explore things. (Teacher 4 interview, 31 July 2006)

Sa ou masani e fa`atonutonu le fanau laiti ia latou ta`aloga masani, a`o le taimi lenei, ua `ou fa`amalosia fanau laiti ia faia ni a latou filifiliga sa`oloto. Ua `ou `avea iai le avanoa i fanau laiti e talatalanoa i uiga o tusi faitau ma ata.

I used to be more directive with children's activities, but now I encourage children with free choices. I give children opportunities to talk about the books and pictures. (Teacher 2 interview, 25 July 2006)

Such interview data was backed up by data from observations of the professional development facilitator, ratings on the process quality rating scale, and video data indicating improvements from 2005 to 2006.

The professional development facilitator observed "different" teaching behaviour, including increased wait time for the children to respond during an interaction. For example, in one instance of written feedback to a teacher, the professional development facilitator wrote:

More active listening
You provided more opportunity for children to contribute
Children telling more about their experiences
Increases in the range of interactions including types of questions (see example)
Need to use more print environment resources displayed in the (a'oga amata)

(Visit notes, 13 March 2006)

Ratings on all but four of the process quality scale items improved from 2005 to 2006. None deteriorated. The greatest improvements were found in adults participating with children in play rather than setting up the environment and leaving children to their own devices, and in evidence of children's creativity. These shifted from occurring very infrequently in 2005 to often happening in 2006.

Figure 1 **Shifts in ratings of process quality from 2005 to 2006[6]**
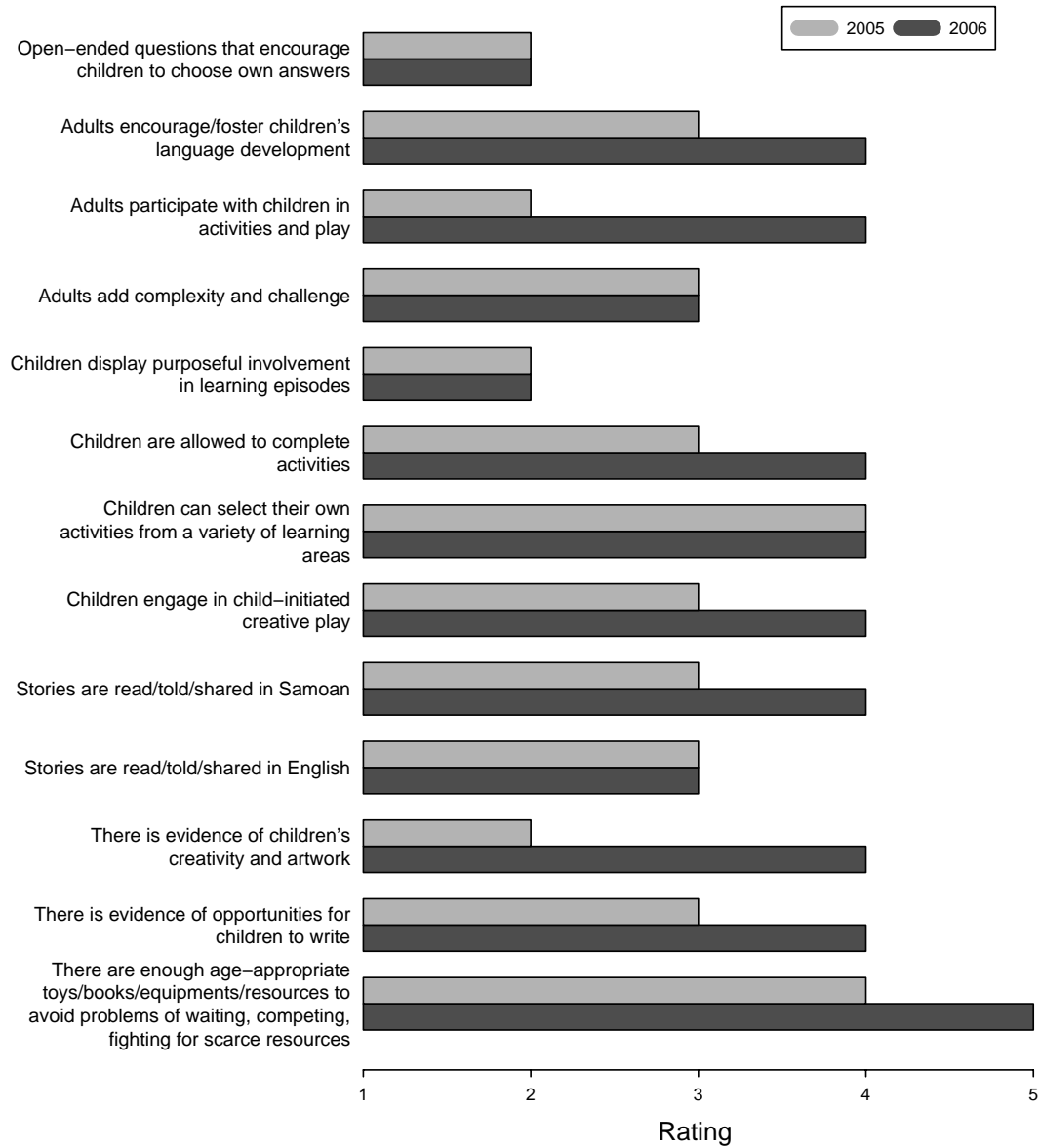
Teachers still had some way to go to improve their questioning and planning for quality interactions. No change was recorded in the observations, rating scale, or video data in increasing the range of questioning from the frequent use of recall-type questions, or in adults extending activities and thinking through scaffolding and co-constructing learning.

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[6] All variables are rated on a 1 to 5 rating scale:

   1 = not all like/never
   2 = very little like/hardly ever
   3 = somewhat like/sometimes
   4 = much like/often
   5 = very much like/always

(b) Samoan language use

Samoan language use was not a specific focus of the action research. Nevertheless, our analysis indicated there was an increase in children's Samoan language use.

The teachers reported children's increasing use of the Samoan language with each other and with adults, together with children learning from each other, improved social interaction, and a greater willingness for the children to express themselves:

> Ua matua iai lava le suiga i fanau laiti. Ua tali fa`a-Samoa le fanau laiti i faia'oga, fa`apea fo`i ma a latou lava fetalia`iga. Ua talanoa fa`a-Samoa fo`i pe`a na`o i latou [fa`apea ma] ua fa`aopoopo pea se vaega o fanau laiti e fa`aalia mai o latou lagona i le gagana Samoa pe`a malilie iai.

> The children have changed a lot. Children respond in Samoan to the teacher and with each other. They speak more Samoan to each other [and are] more willing to express themselves. (Teacher 1 interview, 25 July 2006)

> Ua fa`ateleina le fetufaiga a fanau laiti. Sa masani ona fa`anunumi mai o latou foliga po`o le le malamalama fo`i. Pe`a matou talatalanoa ua fa`apea ona amata talanoa lava i latou. E fetufaa`i le a`oa`oina i fanau laiti. O fanau laiti mai Samoa e fesoasoani iai latou sa fananau i`inei.

> Children are sharing a lot more. They used to frown or not understand. When we talk they are now starting to talk with each other. Children are learning from each other. Children from Islands who are fluent, gives them a boost in the language. (Teacher 4 interview, 31 July 2006)

> O nisi fanau laiti e tali ma ii a`i matou i le gagana Samoa ma le iloa.

> Some children are responding to us in Samoan with *understanding*. [original emphasis] (Teacher 2 interview, 25 July 2006)

Interchanges were now going beyond one word into several words and children were demonstrating increasing confidence in their Samoan language. We attributed this to the teachers allowing more opportunity for children to talk and to initiate interactions, teachers' greater willingness to allow children to discuss their own experiences, and re-organisation that enabled teachers to work with children in small groups (two or three children) rather than with the whole large group (30 children). For example, the following recorded interaction demonstrated how a teacher allowed interactions to proceed, providing children in her small group an opportunity to contribute their own experiences:

> T (reading from a big book): O a mea e mafai ona e faia? (What can you do?)
> T (pointing to the picture): O le a le mea a tama lea e fai? (What is the boy doing?)
> Ch 1: O le solo, la e fufulu. (It is a towel (he is) washing.)
> Ch 2: Solo le tama. (The boy is drying himself.)
> Ch 3: E iai lo`u solo ta`ele. Ou te ta`ele lava au. (I have my own towel. I can bath myself.)

However, although more time was being offered for children to make comment, the episode shows the teacher was still using closed questions and not actively encouraging elaboration.

(c) Print environment

The level of print saturation in the Samoan language had been enhanced and was rated as good in 2006, rather than just adequate. Children's stories were displayed prominently at child's eye level and enjoyed by the children. Photographs show children using the poem charts close to the floor and pointing to the Samoan alphabet display. In this example, children were "acting" as teachers and were interacting with each other showing interest and enjoyment.

Figure 2 **Child-level print displays**

Figure 3 **Children "reading" Samoan alphabet chart**

Many of the adult-focused displays had been replaced by children's art work with Samoan or English captions.

Figure 4   **Child's art work with captions added in English**

Teachers used the children's art work as a springboard for writing stories for them and with them in Samoan. When the children spoke or wrote in English the teachers translated their ideas and wrote their story using Samoan. They encouraged children to use Samoan in their writing activities. A number of photographic examples of such work were taken. As one teacher said:

> Ua `ou `avea le avanoa i fanau laiti ia tu-ma`oti ma a`afia i le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi. Ua `ou tusia le fa`amatalaga a le fanau laiti e uiga i lana valivaliga.

> I am allowing children to be independent and to take part in early literacy. I am writing children's stories about their paintings. (Teacher 1 interview, 25 July 2006)

Figure 5   **Child's story written by teacher in Samoan**

The book displays were more frequently used by the children. The videotapes and photographs show children choosing books; sharing books with the teachers in small group situations; teachers drawing the children's attention to pictures and words; and teachers using Samoan language to translate and/or extend the children's words and ideas.

Figure 6 **Children read books together and with the teacher**

Figure 7 **Teacher interacts one-to-one more often**

Whole-group "mat time" sessions were still being held, but were reduced to one per day. These were important times for cultural sharing.

Figure 8 **Mat time for cultural sharing**

Teachers had increased the use of photographs of children engaging in a range of activities. These photographs were enlarged and captions added, including questions. These provided high interest for the children and parents within the a'oga amata environment.

(d) Teachers' knowledge and ideas about early literacy

As a result of this project, teachers reported a deeper understanding of early literacy. They reported they needed time to understand what was required of them in the project but as it progressed their understanding increased:

> Ua `ou manino nei i le uiga o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi. Ua matou tu`ufesili pea i matou ia`i matou lava i ni ituaiga fesili e fa`alolotoina ai e matou malamalama ma le agava`a.

> I have got a clearer picture now of what early literacy is. We have got into asking ourselves more questions and looking at it in depth. (Teacher 4 interview, 31 July 2006)

This teacher talked about how in the area of children's emergent writing she has a better understanding of how writing develops and how teachers can extend children. She went on to say:

> I le ulua`i amata mai o lenei vaega o le galuega tau le su`esu`ega, sa ou fa`apea lava e faigata, `ae peita`i [o le `au su`esu`e] sa fa`asoasoa mai lo la malamalama ma sa matou tu`ufesili pea. O se matua a`oa'oga taua i lona fa`atulagaina. e fa`apea fo`i i lo`u va`ai ia te a`u lava i le video, o se tulaga aoga tele i le va`ai lea i la`u galue fa`afaia'oga.

> When we first started this process I thought it would be hard but you [the researchers] have shared your knowledge and we have asked questions. It's been a learning process and a good thing to look at my teaching, great to see the video [of me].

The nature of teachers' beliefs about early literacy had shifted. As reported, at baseline teachers believed that good practice involved asking children to copy and trace letters, to listen in large-group situations to books chosen by the teacher, and to repeat words after the teacher. After the project there was increased recognition of the importance of interweaving literacy experiences into everyday activities, allowing children to choose, and undertaking small-group work:

> O lenei polokalame o se fesoasoani tele ia`i matou, fa`apea ma lona taua. I lo`u tofiga fa`a-faia'oga-ulu, ua `ou va`aia ai le taua o le fa`aaogaina o minute uma i le si`osi`omaga o mata`itusi fa`apea ma le taua o le tulimanu faitautusi ma le faletusi. O le faitauina o tusifaitau i fanau laiti, po`o a latou faitauga tusi na`o i latou, ua lelei tele. Ua fa`apea fo`i ona sa`oloto le fanau laiti e filifilia tusifaitau e fiaifia iai. O le latou lava filifiliga tuma`oti, fa`apea fo`i ma le va`ai i o latou ata i ta`aloga ma galuega masani e fiaifia iai. E su`esu`e mai matou i nisi taimi po`o fea o latou ata. Ua matou toe fetu`una`iina i ni vaega se tolu. E `ave e le fanau laiti o latou matua e fa`amatamata iai a latou ata ma a latou galuega `ese`ese.

> The programme has helped us and has been interesting. My role as supervisor makes me see how every minute of time is important, the print, the library is important. Reading to and with children has been good and that children are choosing their own books. The children's interests—having photos about themselves. They seek them out. We have re-organised into

three groups. The children take their parents to show them the charts, the displays. (Teacher 3 interview, 25 July 2006)

The supervisor reported an increasing common understanding amongst the staff about early literacy evidenced by their conversations and sharing of ideas, clarifying the professional development they have received. She thought the project had deepened their professional communication:

> Ioe [i le taimi nei] ua matou talatalanoa so`o fa`atasi e uiga i lenei ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi, Ua matou fetufaa`i pea lava ma toe manatunatu i `aitia. E fa`apea fo`i le matou toe va`ava`ai i le video ma matou talitalie, ma toe tepa ia`i matou lava. Ua tatau lava ona faia se suiga. I nei talatalanoaga [ma faia'oga] ua mafai ona matou fa`amaninoina ni vaega e le`i o`o iai lo latou malamalama i le taimi o le fa`afouina fa`a-faia'oga, ma sa fa`apea ona fefa`asoaa`i i tulaga fa`afaia'oga.

> Yes [now] we talk a lot about this [early literacy] together to reflect on ideas, looking at ourselves in the videos—we laugh but we also see ourselves. We need to change. Through the discussions they [the teachers] can clarify some things they could not see during the PD, and we clarify at our own level. (Teacher 3 interview, 25 July 2006)

(e) Parents' views and aspirations

At the final discussion group, parents continued to be very positive about what teachers were doing at the a'oga amata. Parents appreciated the photographs in the children's portfolios and how the teachers used them to explain how their children were learning. Parents noted the way in which their children were increasingly interested in books, reading, and the Samoan songs and lotu (prayers). They liked the pictures and displays on the walls of the a'oga amata. Their aspirations for their children and support for the teachers at the a'oga amata were still very positive. As one parent said:

> [O lo`u atali`i] e sau loa i le fale fai loa lana 'fa`ataga faitautusi', e masani ona a`oa`o lona tina, i pese a le a'oga amata. E `ese lava lo`u fiafia iai.

> [My boy] does 'pretend' reading when he comes home and he tries to teach his mother the songs. I am very happy (Parent discussion, 25 July 2006).

And another parent said:

> E sau lava R ma `aumai tusifaitau mai le a'oga amata i le matou aiga. Ua va`aia lava lona fiafia tele i tusifaitau, e ui lava ina na`o na su`esu`e a`e laupepa o le tusifaitau `aemaise o le amataga.

> R brings home some books and has got more interested in books, even though he started to just flip through them at the beginning. (Parent discussion, 25 July 2006)

The teachers found increased, informed interaction with parents was a very significant and positive outcome of the professional development and the action research processes. They noted their growing confidence in reporting of children's progress to parents:

I le taimi nei, i lo`u manatu, ua ou talanoa malamalama [i matua]. E uiga i le talanoa mai o fanau laiti, ma fa`ailoa mai o latou lagona i o latou foliga. I le ma fono ma leisi matua i le taeao nei, sa `ou fa`aalia iai le ata-vali a lana tama fa`apea ma lona uiga e tusa ai ma le la`asaga ua o`o iai lona mafaufau. Sa matua maofa lava le matua. Ua `ou lagonaina lava lo`u fa`asoa atu ma lo`u agaga fiafia, le poto masani fa`atasi ma se malamalama ma le aganu`u ua ia te a`u.

I think I talk with knowledge now [to parents]. How children express themselves. In one interview with a parent this morning I shared her child's painting and what it means [in terms of progress]. She was quite touched. I feel I am speaking with experience and knowledge [now]. (Teacher 4 interview, 31 July 2006).

Sa matou fa`aalia i matua `api o galuega a le fanau laiti, `aemaise i le gagana Samoa. Sa fa`apea fo`i ona fa`aalia iai ata o ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi sa matou galulue fa`atasi ai ma a latou fanau laiti … Sa amataina fo`i ona `ave o tusifaitau i o latou aiga. Sa fa`aalia le lagona fiafia o matua i lea vaega, ae peita`i matou le`i fa`aauauina lea tulaga.

We have shown parents their children's profiles, especially with Gagana Samoa. We have shown the children's pictures and working with them on reading and writing. . . . When we started we sent home books. Parents were positive but we did not follow up consistently. (Teacher 3 interview, 25 July 2006)

Reflections on professional development

Teachers appreciated all the aspects of the professional development, but most teachers said the discussion of videotaped learning episodes was particularly valuable to them:

Sa leai lava so`u manatu, o le fa`aaogaina o le video o se tulaga lea mo le iloiloga o le galuega. Na `ou matua ofo lava. Ua matua suia ai o`u lagona fa`atatau aga`i i le video. Ua `ou iloa nei o le aoga o le video e toe mafaufau loloto ai ia matou galuega fa`afaia'oga.

I did not think that video was the way to evaluate. I was surprised it was. It has changed my attitude about video and the role of video is another way of reflecting on our practice. (Teacher 3 interview, 25 July 2006)

O le mea sili ia te a`u o le matamata i le video. E taua lava lo`u va`ai ia te a`u, fa`apea ma le va i isi faia'oga. Ua tele mea aoga ua `ou maua mai i le toe tilotilo i aga sa ou faia ma fa`apea ona toe fa`aleleia galuega.

The best thing for me is watching the video. It is very important to see myself and also watch other staff. I have learned a lot from revisiting those actions and I can go back and improve. (Teacher 1 interview, 25 July 2006)

The main criticisms of the professional development were that the teachers would have liked more support during the action phase in the form of more frequent visits, feedback, and discussions. However, work commitments of the researcher and the professional development facilitator meant that only visits averaging once per month could be made.

Teachers also thought further support, feedback, and reflection beyond this project would be needed to build on the progress made:

> E tatau lava ona tatou galulue fa`atasi e fa`atino fesuia`iga ma fesili pea lava i tulaga e fa`aauau ai le fesuia`iga. Ou te manaomia pea nisi `aitia.
>
> We must work together to carry on our changes, ask for support to keep changing. I want more ideas. (Teacher 2 interview, 25 July 2006)

As the professional development facilitator and researcher we also reflected on the provision of professional development as part of the action research study. We noted the energy in leadership and teamwork amongst the staff and willingness by the teachers to take up suggestions made to them. We were very pleased to witness the changes the teachers made during the project. For example, they took initiatives such as using more photographs in the development of their children's learning stories. The keen interest taken by the parents, the licensee, and the management committee about the project, and the leadership and teamwork that grew from within the staff, were all positive developments. The shifts that they had made personally and professionally were evident in the interactions and increased engagement of the children in early literacy activities. We thought the feedback on specific learning episodes was possibly the most powerful for teachers to gain insights and for them to make changes.

The main difficulties were around time. This included getting together for meetings at times suitable for everyone; time for teachers to absorb the feedback and new information they were receiving throughout the project; and the other teacher commitments such as their ongoing training, church, and family responsibilities.

If we were to do similar action research around early literacy we think we would start with more time on curriculum planning that would feed into the teaching practice. In that way teachers would more effectively have linked planning, teaching, assessment, and evaluation processes. Extra time would need to be allocated for such preparation.

We would have liked to take the a'oga amata through another action cycle to consolidate gains made in the first cycle. Not only has the project increased the understanding of the benefits of the action research process, but it has also provided further opportunities for the teachers to extend their knowledge and understandings about early literacy development in a bilingual/immersion setting.

An important point to remember is that the learning context of any early childhood education centre is a complex interwoven one and that change is not necessarily going to be a linear straightforward process. The same conditions apply in the a'oga amata and other Pasifika centres. In addition, in these centres teachers are constantly combining and recombining knowledge and ways of doing things from two different cultural traditions and in two languages. Given these factors, we were full of admiration for the fact that the teachers moved from day-to-day teaching to becoming more reflective and more innovative than what we observed prior to the commencement of the professional development and action research process.

The legacy of such a project is that the management committee of the a'oga amata has had an experience of research in their centre. When we presented our findings to them they were able to see how such an approach can increase the quality of the teaching and learning through centre-based professional development.

7. Conclusion

In this final chapter we return to address our research question:

- How can we encourage and strengthen children's Samoan and literacy learning within the a'oga amata?

We then emphasise limitations to this study, and discuss implications for further research.

How can we encourage and strengthen children's Samoan and literacy learning within the a'oga amata?

This study provided some insights into early literacy teaching and learning in the bilingual/immersion setting of an a'oga amata.

Teachers were able to extend children's literacy experiences by adding to their existing styles of interacting with children. They continued to teach children to recite and perform, developing competencies that enable children to take on valued roles in Samoan culture. Children were accomplished in speech making, singing traditional songs, and dancing. In addition, teachers learnt to move away from mainly teacher-directed activities and large-group work to participate more in children's play, respond to children's interests and ideas, and allow greater creativity. These interaction styles are linked with children developing as competent learners and communicators.

Teachers found it harder to move from the use of frequent recall-type questions to encouraging children's thinking through asking open-ended questions, scaffolding, and co-constructing learning. These may require a shift in the paradigm of teaching and learning that teachers held, and may be harder to change. We suggest that the reason Samoan and other Pasifika teachers may find this difficult is that they learnt their language within a different cultural context and within traditional adult–child relationships and dynamics. This includes even the kinds of language adults would use to and with children. It is this adaptation of language and culture into an early childhood education context within Aotearoa New Zealand which requires new innovations. In other words, from within their own cultural frameworks teachers must respond to children as active participants in their own learning in a context where questioning and discussion between children and adults is now more important for future learning.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this study found, as did Tagoilelagi (1995), that in parent–child interactions there was little evidence of what Tagoilelagi refers to as Narrative Questioning. In other studies using the process quality rating scale, e.g. *Quality in Parent/Whānau-led Services*

(Mitchell et al., 2006b), we have found that few services are rated very high on these more cognitively challenging interactions, which are therefore a challenge not only for teachers in Pasifika centres but also for teachers in general services.

The teachers were encouraged to make the languages and symbols of Samoan culture even more visible, especially language resources. Burgess (2004) has commented on the lesser number of storybooks available in Gagana Samoa compared with those available in the English language. Likewise, McNaughton et al. (1996) pointed out that the absence of storybooks written in particular Pacific languages is a limiting factor for families (and early childhood services) interacting in these languages with children. Teachers in our study made their own wall charts, wrote stories told by the children on their artwork, wrote and displayed songs, stories, and poems in Samoan, wrote stories from their own culture into "big books", and displayed artefacts from their own culture with Samoan labelling. They translated the early childhood curriculum strands into Samoan for families. This resulted in an environment that was "saturated" in print, a factor that is important for children's reading comprehension during schooling, and for these children, in exposure to the language of their culture.

Some professional development processes were especially successful in helping teachers to learn. Particularly relevant to the a'oga amata is that the participants were involved in investigating pedagogy within their own early childhood setting; teachers were offered pedagogical content knowledge; the professional development supported their own inclusive approach to children and their aiga (families); teachers were helped to change some of their educational practices, beliefs, and understandings of early literacy development; and through the videotapes the teachers gained awareness of their teaching and learning interactions around early literacy experiences. A key professional support in this study was that these Samoan teachers were offered the opportunity throughout to use their own language because the professional development facilitator was also Samoan and very experienced in working in a'oga amata.

This study suggested that videotaping of interactions, followed by reflection and analysis with teachers, was the most powerful tool in influencing change in quality learning and teaching within the a'oga amata. These professional development processes were also found to be associated with enhanced pedagogy in a Best Evidence Synthesis by Linda Mitchell and Pam Cubey (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003).

Limitations

This study examines one approach in an a'oga amata to developing teacher knowledge and expertise important in providing quality early childhood education for Pacific children and their families. It is not prescriptive since one of the lessons from the study is that teachers need to identify their own challenges and develop their own ways forward. It is hoped, however, that others may gain ideas and insights for their own setting by thinking about the developments occurring in this a'oga amata and the reasons for them.

Recommendations

The opportunities for action research alongside professional development support and research have been found to be beneficial in this study and in the Centre of Innovation at the Fa'a Samoa A'oga Amata in Auckland (Podmore, Wendt Samu, & the A'oga Fa'a Samoa, 2006). It would be fruitful for such opportunities to be made available to all teachers in Pasifika early childhood education centres. There is a particular need for centre-based professional development to assist teachers involved in Pacific bilingual/immersion centres where the maintenance of the heritage language is an issue of cultural identity and cultural survival. More specifically, use of video as a tool for analysis and reflection could be used in subsequent studies in Pasifika centres.

In these ways the expectations of Pacific communities can be better met and the more culturally diverse society of Aotearoa New Zealand will reap the benefits of biliterate and cross-culturally confident young people as its citizens.

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Appendix A: Teacher interview questions

The four teachers in the over-twos section will each be interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the project individually about their current knowledge and approaches to the teaching and learning of the Samoan language, and fostering children's early literacy development within the a'oga amata. The information gathered in the teacher interviews will be collated and used to assist in analysing the video data.

The interviews will be an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their present practice, and to discuss what further information they feel they need to further develop their practice.

Each interview will take approximately 30–40 minutes and will be audiotaped. Teachers will be given a choice of language(s) the interview will be conducted in.

The first set of interviews will take place during November 2005 and the second set of interviews will be held in July 2006.

Following an explanation of the purpose of the interview and the interview process we will discuss what is meant by print literacy and come to a shared understanding as a basis for the following discussion.

Baseline teacher interview questions

1. Describe the main strengths of your current teaching and learning programme in supporting children's early literacy development. (Probe: What are the main reasons for these strengths? Where do you get your ideas from for your language programme? What informs your thinking? In what ways are you hoping to further develop your practice in this area in the future?)

2. What do you believe is your role in the teaching and learning of Gagana Samoa in this a'oga amata? (Probe: What are the ways in which you share stories with the children? What do you do to help the children with their oral language, writing, and reading? What do you do to help children understand or think about what they read or write? How did you decide on the strategies you use? Please give some recent examples.)

3. The children in the a'oga amata come from a range of backgrounds. What literacy experiences do you think they bring with them into the a'oga amata from their home and church language environments that you can build on and support? (Prompt for all types of literacy experiences: oral, reading, writing, visual, cultural.)

4. What levels of fluency in Gagana Samoa do your children bring with them into the a'oga amata from home and church that you can build on and support?

5. What are your present experiences of using the Samoan and English languages within the a'oga amata? (Probes: In what situations are the different languages used? What are the challenges for yourself and for the children when both languages are used? What do you do when a child speaks English? When a child code switches? When you use an English text story? What is the present policy, if any, of the a'oga amata about using English and Samoan?)

6. If a student teacher on placement asked you to explain to them how you use interactions with the children to build literacy skills in your a'oga amata, what would you tell them? (Probes: When a child chooses a book I usually…..? When a child points to a picture in a book I usually…..? When we read a story together with one child? When we read a story with a group of children on the mat I usually……? When a child wants to write a story, or writes something on a piece of paper for me to read I usually……?)

7. What, if any, are the dilemmas you are facing about the teaching and learning of English and Samoan languages in the a'oga amata programme with the over-twos and the children's transition to school? (Probes: Policies about when and where the languages are listened to, spoken, read, or written. Meeting expectations of parents and wider community in preparing children for school literacy skills.)

8. Anything you would like to ask or comments you would like to make about this project?

1. Fa`amatala mai ni malosi`aga o lo`o iai le tou polokalame i le taimi nei e uiga i a`oa`oga ma le a`oa`oina mo le lagolagoina o fanau laiti i le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi? O a ni mafua`aga o ia malosi`aga? O fea o maua mai ai ni `aitia mo le polokalame tau le gagana? O a ni mafaufauga ua iai? O a ni auala o outou fa`amoemoe e fa`atino, e atili fa`aauau ai pea le atina`ega o lenei vaega i le lumana`i?

2. O le a so outou talitonuga e tusa ai ma le tou matafaioi e uiga i le a`oa`oga ma le a`oa`oina o le gagana Samoa i le a`oga amata? O a ni auala o lo`o outou faia e tusa ai ma le fa`amatalaina o tala i fanau laiti? O a ni galuega o outou fa`atino ai i le fanau laiti le gagana tautala, tusitusi ma le faitautusi? O a ni a outou fesoasoani i le fanau laiti ina ia tau malamalama ma mafaufau i uiga o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi? Sa fa`apefea ona outou filifilia ni auala e fa`aaogaina? Fa`amolemole aumai ni fa`ata`ita`iga tau lalata mai.

3. O fanau laiti i le a`oga amata e omai mai ituaiga o aiga. O a ni ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi o omai ma i latou mai o latou aiga, o le lotu fa`apea ma ni gagana mai lo latou si`osi`omaga, ina ia outou tapu`eina ma lagolago atili? (Aemaise vaega uma tau le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi, gagana tautala, fa`alogo, o maimoaga fa`apea le gagana fa`aleaganu`u).

4. O le a le tulaga o le malosi o le gagana Samoa o omai ma fanau laiti i le a`oga amata mai o latou aiga ma le lotu, ina ia tapu`e ma lagolago?

5. O a ni outou poto masani i le a`oga amata mo le fa`aaogaina o le gagana Samoa ma le fa`a-Peretania? O fa`apefea le tulaga e uiga i le fa`aaogaina o ituaiga gagana? O a ni lu`itau mo outou fa`apea le fanau laiti e tusa ai ma le fa`aoagaina o gagana e lua? O le a lau mea e fai pe`a tautala fa`a-Peretania le fanau laiti? E fa`apefea pe`a fefiloi le gagana a le fanau laiti? O

a taimi e faitau ai tusi fa`a-Peretania? O a aiaiga e tusa ai ma le fa`aaogaina o le gagana fa`a-Peretania ma le gagana Samoa?

6. E fa`apefea ona e fa`amatala i le teine/tama a`oga o lo`o galue i le a`oga amata le tulaga e uiga i le fetalia`i ma fanau laiti ina ia atia`e le latou ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi? A filifilia e le fanau laiti tusifaitau, e masani ona `ou .......? A fa`asino lima o le fanau laiti i ni ata i totonu o le tusifaitau, e masani ona `ou........? Pe a ma faitau fa`atasi ma le fanau laiti e to`atasi, e masani ona `ou.......? Pe a matou faitau fa`atasi ma se vaega laiti o fanau laiti e masani ona `ou.....? Pe a mana`o mai se fanau laiti e tusia se tala, pe so`o se tusitusiga, e masani ona `ou......?

7. O a ni fa`afitauli, o iai nei e tusa ai ma le a`oa`oga fa`apea le a`oa`oina o le gagana fa`a-Peretania ma le gagana Samoa i le polokalame a le a`oga amata i le vaega ua silia i le 2 tausaga, fa`apea ma le ulufale atu i a`oga Tulagalua? O iai ni aiaiga tusitusia fa`atatau i le fa`aaogaina o ituaiga o gagana i so`o se nofoaga ma taimi fa`atulagaina? E fa`atatau i le mana`oga o matua ma pitonu`u mo le saunia ai fanau e ulufale atu i a`oga Tulagalua.

8. O iai se fesili po`o se lagona e fia fa`aalia e tusa ai ma lenei su`esu`ega?

Final teacher interview questions

1. Could you briefly describe what you did in the action research project?

2. Are there any things you do now, in relation to early literacy teaching and learning, that you didn't do before the project? Are there any things you did before the project that you don't do now?

3. Could you tell me about any changes you have made, if any, as a result of your involvement in the project?

   (a) Changes in your beliefs about the teaching and learning of early literacy and about your role as a teacher? (Prompt: Could you give me a specific example? Why did you make this change?)

   (b) Changes in your knowledge about early literacy teaching and learning? (Prompt: Could you give me a specific example? Why did you make this change?)

   (c) Changes in your teaching practice in the area of early literacy? For example, the way you interact with children, the literacy related activities you do, what you have provided in the environment? (Prompt: Could you give me a specific example? Why did you make this change?)

   (d) Changes in what you send home to parents or how you communicate to parents about the literacy activities their children engage in within the a'oga amata? (Prompt: Could you give me a specific example? Why did you make this change?)

(e) Changes in the sorts of professional conversations you have with your colleagues or how you work together as a result of the project? (Prompt: Could you give me a specific example? Why did you make this change?)

(f) Changes in the children's early literacy learning (shared reading, writing activities, imaginative play, the ways they interact together, and their use of Samoan language as a result of the project)?

4. What were the most important ways in which the PD helped you and your centre to enhance early literacy experiences? (Prompt: Think about the range of experiences you had during the project such as: seeing yourself on video, your colleagues and the children interacting on video, looking at the photos of the children interacting, seeing Feaua'i modelling, having professional conversations at the meetings and with your colleagues, getting feedback, etc.)

5. Were there any surprises for you? If yes, what were they and why?

6. What challenges did you face in making changes? Were there any issues or dilemmas that you faced? What were they?

7. Were there any things you would have liked in the PD to make it work better for you? If so, what were these?

8. How well do you think you will be able to sustain the changes you have made during the project? What support will you need? Please describe.

9. What, if anything, would you like to do next to extend early literacy experiences in the a'oga amata?

10. Any other comments?

Fa'afetai lava! Thank you for your time.

FESILI MO FAIA`OGA

1. E mafai ona e fa`amatala `oto`oto mai lau galuega i lenei su`esu`ega fa`atino?

2. Ua iai ni galuega ua e fa`atinoina i le taimi nei e tusa ai ma le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi e te le`i fa`atinoina i le vaitaimi muamua ae le`i fa`atinoina lenei su`esuega?' E iai la ni mea sa e faia muamua ae le`i fa`atinoina lenei su`esu`ega ua e le faia i le taimi nei?

3. E mafai ona e ta`u maia ni fesuia`iga ua e faia nei, pe afai o iai, e tusa ai ma lou a`afiaga i lenei su`esu`ega?

(a) Ni fesuia`iga e uiga i lou talitonuga fa`atatau i le ulua`i a`oa`oina o le faitautusi ma le tusitusi fa`apea lou tiute fa`afaia'oga? E mafai ona aumaia se fa`ata`ita`iga fa`appitoa? Aisea ua e faia ai lenei fesuia`iga?

(b) Ni fesuia`iga i lou malamalama i le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi ma lona a`oa`oina? (E mafai ona aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga fa`apitoa? Aisea ua e faia ai lenei fesuia`iga?

(c) Fesuia`iga i le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi? O se fa`ata`ita`iga e tusa ia ma le tulaga i le talanoa ma le fanau laiti i a latou tusitusiga po`o se tusifaitau, po`o a ni fa`atinoga e tusi ai ma le tulimanu faitautusi? E mafai ona ta`u mai se fatata`ita`iga fa`apitoa? Aisea sa e faia lenei fesuia`iga?

(d) Ni fesuia`iga e tusa ai ma ni feso`ota`iga ma matua e uiga i le tulaga o le faitautusi ma le tusitusi ua fa`atino i le a'oga amata? E mafai ona aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga fa`apitoa? Aisea ua e faia ai lenei fesuia`iga?

(e) Ni fesuia`iga e tusa ai ma ni ituaiga o talatalanoaga fa`afaia'oga pe fa`apefea ona outou galulue fa`atasi e tusa ai ma lenei su`esu`ega? Aisea ua e faia lenei fesuia`iga?

(f) Ni fesuia`iga i fanau laiti e tusa ai ma le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi (e pei o le faiatauina o se tusilapo`a mo se kulupu o fanau laiti, o a latou ulua`i tusitusiga, o ta`aloga fa`alemafaufau, o talanoaga fa`atasi a le fanau laiti, fa`apea ma le latou fa`aa'ogaina o le gagana Samoa e tusa ai ma lenei su`esue`ga?

4. O a lava ni vaega taua sa outou maua mai le vaega o le fa`afouina fa`afaia'oga, sa matua fesoasoani tele i le fa`atinoga o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi. (Mafaufau i a outou galuega sa aofia ai lenei su`esu`ega e pei o lou ata i le video, o nisi o faia'oga, o galuega a le fanau laiti, o ata o le fanau laiti fa`apea ma ni fa`ata`ita`iga sa faia e Feaua`i i taimi o a outou fetufa`iga fa`afaia'oga fa`apea ma sui o faia'oga sa iai iia fonotaga, ina ia aumai ai ni iloiloga).

5. Sa iai ni tulaga sa e ofo ai? Afai sa iai, oa ia tulaga ofo ae aisea fo`i ua mafua ai?

6. O a ni lu`itau sa feagai ma `oe i le fa`atinoina o fesuia`iga? Sa iai ni fa`afitauli sa feagai ma `oe? O a ia fa`afiatauli?

7. O iai nsi vaega e te fia galue ai pea i le tulaga o le fa`afouina fa`afaia'oga ina ia saga fa`alelei atili ai pea lou tomai? Afai e iai, oa nisi o ia vaega?

8. E fa`apefea i lou lava lagona/mafaufau ona e mafaia ona fa`aauau pea nei fesuia`iga e pei ona fa`aalia mai e le su`esu`ega? O a ni ituaiga o lagolago e te mana`omia/fiamaua? Fa`amolemole e fa`amatala mai ia vaega.

9. Pe afai lava e iai nisi manatu e te toe mana`o e toe fa`atino e fa`alauteleina ai pea lenei vaega o le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitatusi ma le tusitusi i totonu o le a'oga amata, e mafai ona fa`ailoa mai?

10. E iai la nisi manatu?

Fa'afetai lava! Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Parent discussion questions

Purpose:

Parents will be invited to participate in a group discussion with the researchers to:

* let them know about the research and have any questions answered
* discuss what kinds of activities around print (e.g., storytelling, reading, and writing) their children are involved in at home, and how they expect the a'oga amata to support their children's literacy.

Method

The group discussion will be of approximately one-hour duration. Diane and Feaua'i will facilitate. Feaua'i will lead discussion in Samoan, as and when required. Full written notes will be taken and returned to parents for any further comments or changes.

A specific date and time for the group discussion will be negotiated and will take place during November 2005. A further discussion will be undertaken in July 2006.

Following an opening prayer and appropriate introductions between the researchers and parents we will discuss the following questions:

Group discussion with parents: Baseline

1. What kinds of language activities does your child like to do at home? (Probe: For example, writing letters to relatives, invitations to family celebrations, making up shopping lists, singing songs, drawing pictures, reading books together with aunty, grandma, older sisters, or brothers, Bible stories, verses, reading adverts or circulars etc.)

2. Write down the details of your child on this form (to be circulated): name, age, languages used at home, their child's fluency in Samoan, any or all of the following: can he/she understand, speak fluently, read, write in Samoan, time since they started coming to the a'oga amata? (Forms will be distributed to the parents and the researchers will assist them to fill out the form which is included at the end of this document.)

3. What are the a'oga amata teachers doing to help your child develop his/her speaking, reading, and writing skills in Gagana Samoa?

4. What are your hopes and dreams for your children's future in their learning of Samoan language and the learning of English? (Probe for speaking, reading, and writing.)

Comments

We will be talking with you again next year in July 2006. At that time we will ask you to talk about any changes you are aware of in the a'oga amata, and how you think your child's reading and writing in the Samoan language has developed.

O Ulua`i talatalanoaga ma matua

1. O a ituaiga o galuega po`o fa`atinoga e faia e lau tama i le aiga? (O le fa`ata`ita`iga, e pei o le tusia o ni tusi i aiga, o vala`aulia i ni sauniga fa`aleaiga e pei o asofanau, o le tusia o le lisi o fa`atauga, usuina o se pese, tusia o ni ata, faitautusi ma uso o lona tina po`o le tuafafine o lona tama fa`apea ma tina matua, o uso matutua po`o tuagane, o tala mai le Tusi Pa`ia, o ni fuai`upu, o fa`asalalauga mai le nusipepa fa`apea ma fa`asalalauga etc).

2. Ia tusia ni nai fa`amatalaga e uiga i lau tama i le pepa lea (e fa`ailoa mai ai) lona igoa, tausaga, o lana gagana e fa`aaogaina i le aiga, o le fa`aaoga so`o e lau tama o le gagana Samoa, po`o mafai fo`i ona malamalama, talanoa, faitautusi talu mai ona amata a`oga I le a`oga amata? O le`a tufaina atu pepa e fa`atumu i le fa`ai`uga, ma o le`a fesoasoani atu le `ausu`esu`e e tou te galulue i lea vaega.

3. O a ni galuega a faia`oga o le a`oga amata o fa`atinoina e fesoasoani atu ai i lau tama i le atina`e o le a`oa`oina o le gagana tautala, ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi i le gagana Samoa?

4. O a ni ou fa`amoemoega ma ni lagona e tusa ai ma le lumana`i o lau fanau e fa`atatau i lo latou a`oa`oina o le gagana fa`aSamoa fa`apea ma le fa`a-Peretania? (E fa`atatau lea i le gagana tautala, faitautusi ma le tusitusi).

O ni fa`amatalaga:

Ua i ai le fa`amoemoe ma te toe fo`i mai i le 2006 masina o Iulai. I lena vaitaimi tatou te fetufaa`i ai i ni fesili ma manatu e uiga i ni fesuia`iga mai le a`oga amata fa`atatau i le tulaga ua o`o i ai le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi i le gagana Samoa o lau fanau.

Group discussion with parents: Final

Talofa lava! Welcome to our group discussion!

Our action research project about improving early literacy in the a'oga amata that began in 2005 is now coming to an end. We would very much appreciate finding out from your point of view about any changes you might have noticed happening since we first began working with the teachers.

1. What did you see happening during the action research on early literacy in the a'oga amata?

2. Have you noticed any changes in the centre since our project began such as:
   • changes in the print or literacy resources and where and how they are displayed? (For example?)

- the sorts of literacy activities the children are engaged in? (For example?)
- how the teachers and children are interacting together during literacy experiences? (For example?)
- Whether you have seen any changes in your child's interest and involvement talking with others, listening to and telling stories, looking at pictures and print on the walls and in books, drawing, and writing etc? (Please give some examples.)

3. Have you noticed changes at home with your child in:
   - what they bring home from a'oga amata? (For example?)
   - the kinds of things your child talks about happening at the centre? (For example?)
   - their level of using and understanding Samoan and English? (Any examples?)

4. Have any of the changes in the a'oga amata given you new ideas you are using at home to help your child to use Samoan and English? If so, can you give an example of what you are trying? What changes have you seen in your child?

5. What, if anything, do you think is important for the teachers to focus on next to enhance what they are already doing in early literacy?

Fa'afetai lava! Thank you for your time.

O le Talatalanoaga ma matua o le EFKS A`oga Amata

Talofa lava! E fa`amalo atu e tusa ai ma le afifio mai i le tatou talanoaga i lenei afiafi

O lenei su`esu`ega fa`atino e fa`atatau i ni auala e fa`alelei atili ai le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi i le a'oga amata. Sa amataina lenei su`esu`ega i le 2005, ma ua tau lalata nei i lona tulaga tau fa`ai`ui`u. Ua ma fia iloa ni o outou finagalo po`o ni manatu e tusa ai ma se tagataga`i i ni fesuia`iga ua tutupu mai, e fa`atatau i le matou galuega ma faia'oga mai le amataga o lenei su`esuega.

1. O a ni tulaga ua tutupu mai i lenei su`esu`ega i le vaega o le ulua`i faitautusi ma le tusitusi i le a'oga amata?

2. O e silafia ni fesuia`iga i le a'oga amata talu ona amata mai lenei su`esu`ega e pei o le:
   • fesusi`iga o le fa`aaliga o ituaiga o alaga`oa, o nisi tusitusiga i totonu lava o lea vaega o le a'oga amata fa`apea fo`i ma le tulaga o le fa`aaliga o ituaiga tusitusiga i luga o le pavali? (O se fa`ata`ita`iga?)
   • o ituaiga o gaioiga o le ulua`i faitatusi ma le tusitusi o a`afia ai le fanau laiti? (o ni fa`ata`ita`iga)
   • o fa`apefea ona talatalanoa fa`atasi fanau laiti ma faia'oga i taimi o faitautsui ma tusituiga? (o ni fa`ata`ita`iga)
   • po`o e va`aia ni fesuia`iga i le fiafia o lou alo e a`afia i le faitautusi ma le tusitusi e pei o ni talanoaga ma nisi fanau laiti, fa`alogologo i ni tusifaitau e faitau iai, va`ava`ai i ni ata o tusitusiga/tusifaitau, ata `ese`ese i luga o le pa vali? (Fa`amolemole aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga)

3. Ua e silafia se fesuia`iga i lou alo i le aiga e tusa ai ma vaega ia:
   • ni mea o lo`o latou aumaia mai le a'oga amata i le aiga? (aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga)
   • ni ituaiga o mea o lo`o talanoa iai lou alo i ni tulaga o mea o lo`o tutupu i le a'oga amata. (aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga)
   • le tulaga o le malamalama/fa`aaogaina o le gagana Samoa ma le gagana Peretania?(aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga)

4. O fa`apea i nei fesuia`iga ona maua ai ni manatu fou i lou fa`aaogaina o le gagana Samoa ma le fa`aPeretania i lou alo i totonu o le aiga? Afai o iai, e mafai ona aumai se fa`ata`ita`iga o e taumafai iai? O iai se feasuia`iga o e va`aia i lou alo?

5. O le a se isi itu taua i lou silafia mo faia'oga e tatau ona fa`alelei atili i le tulaga o le a`oa`oina o le ulua`i faitatusi ma le tusitusi?

Fa'afetai lava! mo o outou taimi taua.

Appendix C: Process quality rating scale items

PASIFIKA EARLY LITERACY PROJECT OCTOBER 2005

The following items were selected from the Process Quality Rating Scale used in the NZCER/TKRNT early childhood research projects: Use of Equity Funding; Quality in Parent-Led Services, and the Evaluation of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan: Phase One.

Rationale for use: These rating scale items will be used to rate selected indicators of quality within the wider environment of the a'oga amata in relation to language development and early literacy development. These items were specifically selected from the Process Quality Rating Scale to observe and rate those aspects of the centre's activities and environment that support and promote positive early literacy experiences of the children within it. Some specific references to a'oga amata and Gagana Samoa have been added. This scale of ratings could be used by the teachers themselves, at a later date, as an instrument for identifying further areas for change and action.

The Rating Scale: All variables are rated on a 1 to 5 rating scale:

1 = not all like/never
2 = very little like/hardly ever
3 = somewhat like/sometimes
4 = much like/often
5 = very much like/always

ELABORATION:

The 1 to 5 ratings are used to rate whether or not the characteristics described in the main heading describe what is observed at the early childhood service:

1 = This description is not at all like this early childhood service. What is being described never happened during the visit.
2 = This description is very little like this early childhood service. What is being described hardly ever (once or twice) happened during the visit.
3 = This description is somewhat like this early childhood service. What is being described sometimes happened during the visit.
4 = This description is much like this early childhood service. What is being described happened often, i.e. on a regular basis throughout the visit.
5 = This description is very much like this early childhood service. Most of what is described happened all the time during the visit.

At the end of the visit, all variables should have a rating. There should be no double ratings (e.g. 4–5).

A   Adult–Child Interactions

1   Adults ask open-ended questions that encourage children to choose their own answers

1   No open-ended questions are heard. Frequent use of instructional language in Gagana Samoa.

5   Adults take advantage of many opportunities to extend children's thinking by asking open-ended questions which encourage creative thinking. Adults offer opportunities for children to come up with a range of different answers, to encourage thinking and creativity. Open-ended questioning connects with children's interests. The questioning helps sustain and encourage conversations and extends ideas/concepts.

2   Adults encourage/foster children's language development

1   Very limited language is used. There is little active listening. Adults talk at children. There is little opportunity for children to contribute to conversations with adults. Adults direct and instruct children.

5   Adults participate in verbal turn-taking with children. Adults tell stories about everyday activities. Adults use meaningful language to explain and describe activity, including when they are carrying an infant or toddler. Adults model effective language strategies (e.g., they extend children's sentences, use a mix of question types) for accessing meaningful information and ideas. Adults interact with the children through stimulating conversation. Adults discuss situations, events, and activities and encourage responses. They incorporate new vocabulary into their conversations.

3   Adults participate with children in activities and play

1   Adults monitor children's play but rarely or never join in. Adults stand. Adults are detached and aloof.

5   Adults sit with children on the floor, if appropriate, and become involved in their interests. Adults allow children to take the lead in play episodes. They respond to verbal cues and gestures from the children in English and Samoan by describing what is happening in Samoan. Adults facilitate social interactions, e.g. by introducing children and adults and by facilitating friendships. Adults join in children's activities (both individual and group), offer materials or information to facilitate play and learning around a particular interest. Adults may enter into role plays with children and continue their interests throughout the session.

4   Adults add complexity and challenges for children

1   No sustained conversations with children are heard. Adult-created children's worksheets are evident. TV watching is part of the children's routine.

5   Adults encourage children to initiate activities and extend these activities by, e.g., scaffolding, extending, discussion, modelling, or playing (Tuakana/teina concept). [Adults encourage the children to lead cultural activities. Adults acknowledge children for initiating leadership in cultural activities.] Sustained adult–child conversations and joint problem solving are commonplace. Adults ask questions to encourage children to solve problems and persevere. Adults pose challenges that are appropriate for those children present. Adults suggest new strategies.

5   Children display purposeful involvement in learning episodes

1   Children flit from one activity to another with no concentration on activities or interactions.

5   Children concentrate for sustained periods of time in learning episodes on their own and with others. Children persevere in the face of challenges. They display personal satisfaction in their work, e.g. exclaim, show work to others, repeat an activity. Children are not distracted from their interest because of their absorption in the learning episode. Children are purposeful in their involvement with equipment and materials.

6   Children are allowed to complete activities

1   Children must finish all activities when adults dictate. There is a regimented, inflexible schedule.

5   Children have control over when activities are to be completed. Routines for children, such as toileting, do not cut across learning episodes. Adults respect the needs of different children to be creative or complete activities according to their own schedules. Adults prepare children by reminding them that a group activity or regular routine is about to occur.

7   Children can select their own activities from a variety of learning areas

1   There is an extremely limited range of activities for the children to choose from—less than three at most times.

5   Children have access to a range of sensory rich (rather than over-stimulating) materials, including natural materials. Children can self-select from a wide range of available activities. Some activities are set up or changed from session to session to attract attention and stimulate interest. Learning areas provide different opportunities for children to develop their skills, including gross and fine motor activities, cognitive-language activities, creative activities (artwork, collage, etc.), science and nature activities, music activities, cultural activities, and possibly others.

8   Children engage in child-initiated creative play

(e.g. storytelling, singing, pretend play, drama, making music)

1   No creative play whatsoever is observed.

5   Children are encouraged to play games and create surprises. Frequent creative play is observed, over a wide range of activities, e.g. storytelling, singing, pretend play, making music. Drama is done by both boys and girls. Adults encourage creative play and extend it, (e.g., in a'oga amata children are encouraged to tell their own stories, re-telling past events or stories in Samoan or Samoan and English).

9   Stories are read/told/shared in Samoan

1   No stories are read, told, or shared during the observation period.

5   Both children and adults share stories/books. Languages used and situations used are noted. Children can access books to look at in both languages. They share books, stories, and rhymes with adults. Children are observed (either together or alone) reading or sharing stories. Story-sharing sessions, including children, occur at least once during the observation period and more than one story is shared. Children are actively encouraged to join in when the storytelling is going on, e.g., to ask and answer questions about the story. Adults make connections between the children's world and the story and move beyond the story to ask for thoughts about characters, behaviour, and motivation. Stories may be told through songs and dance.

10   Stories are read/told/shared in English

1   No stories are read, told, or shared during the observation period.

5   Both children and adults share stories/books. Languages used and situations used are noted. Children can access books to look at in both languages. They share books, stories, and rhymes with adults. Children are observed (either together or alone) reading or sharing stories. Story-sharing sessions, including children, occur at least once during the observation period and more than one story is shared. Children are actively encouraged to join in when the storytelling is going on, e.g., to ask and answer questions about the story. Adults make connections between the children's world and the story and move beyond the story to ask for thoughts about characters, behaviour, and motivation. Stories may be told through songs and dance.

11   There is evidence of children's creativity and artwork

1   There is absolutely no evidence of children's artwork or creativity in the early childhood service.

5   Paintings, collage, drawing, print-making, weaving, carving, constructing, cutting, and stitching are being done during a large proportion of the session and by many children. Artwork and creativity are visible on walls, at or just above children's eye level. The artwork of children is displayed at levels where they can see it. Artwork shows no evidence of children following adult templates—"child's hand did the work". There are a variety of creative activities observed such as pretend play, carpentry, storytelling, drama, dancing, and music-making.

12   The centre is a "print-saturated" environment in Samoan

1   There is no evidence of print whatsoever: no books, no posters, no other forms of writing.

5   The early childhood service is very print-focused and encourages print awareness. Examples of Samoan script are evident. Children are encouraged to listen to and read stories, look at books, and be aware of print in use. Print is visible on a variety of surfaces (e.g., posters, packets, charts, containers, etc.) and at different heights and is attractively displayed. Much of the print is child-focused. Print is visible at children's eye level or just above. A range of books in Samoan is readily accessible to children of all ages.

13   The centre is a "print-saturated" environment in English

1   There is no evidence of print whatsoever: no books, no posters, no other forms of writing.

5   The early childhood service is very print-focused and encourages print awareness. Examples of English script are evident. Children are encouraged to listen to and read stories, look at books, and be aware of print in use. Print is visible on a variety of surfaces (e.g., posters, packets, charts, containers, etc.) and at different heights and is attractively displayed. Much of the print is child-focused. Print is visible at children's eye level or just above. A range of books in English is readily accessible to children of all ages.

14   There is evidence of opportunities for children to write

1   No writing materials are accessible to children. Adults never write down what children say. Adults may pressure children to write when the child has no interest. Writing is an isolated activity and unrelated to the context of the child.

5   Children are encouraged to explore thoughts, experiences, and ideas through using symbols. A range of writing materials is readily accessible to children, e.g. pencils, felt tip pens, ink pens. Children have access to paper appropriate to a writing task, e.g. A4 or telephone pads. Children are observed to engage in writing or pretend writing. Adults write down what children say when interest is shown. Adults emphasise the purpose of writing to communicate with others. Children are encouraged and praised for writing their own name. Children's writing is displayed for others to see.

15 There are enough age-appropriate toys/books/equipment (resources) to avoid problems of waiting, competing, and fighting for scarce resources

1   There are very few resources and children are constantly fighting over those that are available.

5   A very good variety of accessible resources, both indoors and out, including appropriate resources for children (e.g., treasure baskets, materials for heuristic play, low mirrors and pictures at floor level, books, natural objects, balls, sensory experiences). No competing or waiting is seen. The equipment/materials are attractively presented to avoid clutter and provide easy access for children.