Creative Writing with Year 11 Pasifika Students: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

Students cannot produce writing with a strong personal voice that commands attention unless they are physically and emotionally engaged in the writing process.

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This research was carried out in 2002 while Cheryl was working as the secondary English Adviser at Team Solutions.

ABSTRACT

Pasifika students are taught to be respectful of their teachers. This respect often takes the form of providing what they think the teachers wants rather than providing work that comes from the heart. This small-scale research, which was conducted in a class of low-achieving, co-educational Pasifika students in a decile 1 school, set out to prove that by using a scaffolded approach to the teaching of writing and by using the works of Pasifika writers as models their writing, students would be better engaged in the writing process and would be encouraged to produce writing which reflected their own culture, thus sharpening their own personal voice.

These students were in an Alternative English class, the course structure of which was very different from mainstream classes who were having their work assessed against the achievement standards for NCEA. The criteria for the poetic writing achievement standard 1.1 demand writing that commands attention (for excellence). The level of commitment and engagement required to achieve this standard will come only if students are writing from their own experience and if the students feel this experience is valued.

Although the class had done no poetic writing in their Year 11 course thus far, the writing produced after three weeks of work in class time showed that with a considered pedagogical approach students could in fact achieve success. " I think with some of them it made a definite difference. I mean just looking at the work it's different from what I've seen coming out. There's a different sense to it". (Year 11 teacher).

INTRODUCTION

Pasifika students are trained to be respectful of their teachers. This respect often takes the form of providing what they think the teacher wants rather than providing work which comes from the heart. In Samoa, for example, the home and school operate according to the same model, and work hand in hand to form children's behaviour. Children are strictly taught to respect and obey. They believe that the best behaviour is shown by being quiet and a good listener (Taleni,1998, p.23).

In the poetic writing strand of the New Zealand English Curriculum (Ministry of Education 1994) students working at Level 6 of the curriculum (Year 11) are required to "write on a variety of topics, shaping, editing, and reworking texts to express

experiences and ideas imaginatively in an extended range of genres, choosing appropriate language features and using conventions of writing accurately and with discrimination". This can be a problem for students who are not accustomed to expressing their own ideas and who do not see their life experiences as being valued in the school setting.

Writing in the year 11 classroom is assessed against the criteria of achievement standards for NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) (see Appendix I). These criteria demand writing, which "commands attention" (for excellence). It is my contention that the level of commitment and engagement required to pass this achievement standard for NCEA will only come if students are writing from their own experience and if the students feel that this experience is valued. Ladson-Billings (1994, p17) sees "culturally relevant teaching as a way of using student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture".

This is an important issue in secondary education at present as the new NCEA qualification, which replaces School Certificate, is being implemented from 2002. Fifty per cent of this qualification is internally assessed and fifty per cent is externally assessed. Achievement standard 1.1 creative writing is internally assessed thus placing emphasis on the teaching pedagogy used to teach it as this can influence the success or failure of a student.

This is also an issue for Pasifika students whose rate of success in secondary school qualifications is lower than that of Palagi / European students. The latest report of the Education Review Office "The Education of Pacific students in NZ Schools" (June 2002) states that "evidence from the National Education Monitoring Programme, external examination results and schools themselves indicates that Pacific students are not achieving at the same level as their non-Pacific counterparts." The government agency, Youth Affairs, reports, "In 1996…Asians and Europeans were more likely to get secondary qualifications and gain higher grades than Maori and Pacific Islands people". It is of concern that the Youth Affairs fact sheet shows that there are "smaller proportions of Maori and Pacific Islands people who have more than the minimum level of literacy" (Youth Affairs 2002). This makes it even more important to scaffold the learning of Pasifika students by teachers as "mediators of the learning experience" in order to uncover the "hidden potential" of these students (Feuerstein in Sharron 1987, p.303).

This research study set out to prove the hypothesis that students cannot produce writing with a strong personal voice that commands attention unless they are physically and emotionally engaged in the writing process. The way to engage Pasifika students initially is through the use and therefore validation of their own culture. Further engagement in the process comes from using a scaffolded learning approach (Vygotsky in Sharron 1987, p.303).

Teachers must also continue to ask questions about the assumptions and values that underlie teaching and learning in our schools and how these affect learners. The western view of a person as a distinct, physically bounded, genetically determined, self actualising individual is opposed to the view prevalent in Pacific societies of a

person being defined through his/her placement in different social settings or contexts (Linnekin & Poyer 1990:7 in Thaman, 1997, p.128).

In order to make students feel more comfortable in the creative writing process, it might benefit to have them working cooperatively in groups rather than at individual desks. It would be possible to do the initial brainstorming in small groups, to use peers for constructive feedback and then to return to small groups for peer review and critiquing of the writing. Taleni, (1998, p.22) notes "students are often afraid to express their thoughts in a whole-class situation and prefer to express their ideas & opinions in small groups or in a one-to-one situation".

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions this research project sought to answer were:

- Are Year 11 Pasifika students more fully engaged in the reading and writing process when the works of Pasifika writers are read in the English classroom?
- Does a scaffolded approach help low achieving Pasifika students produce poetic writing in the English classroom?
- Are Year 11 Pasifika students more likely to produce poetic writing with a strong personal voice when the works of Pasifika writers are used as models in the English classroom?

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this research were a Year 11 co-educational class of mainly Samoan and Tongan ESOL students in a South Auckland secondary school. The majority of the students were New Zealand born but a small minority were ESOL students born overseas. There was a teacher aide working with these students. All students were working in an Alternative English class which was doing mainly English and Communication unit standards rather than the achievement standards of the majority of Year 11 mainstream students in New Zealand. The students' results on the Progressive Achievement Tests showed them to be performing on the 25th percentile and below. This put them well below the national norm for literacy.

The teacher of this class was also a participant in the research. She was a Year 2 teacher who has had no previous experience with Pasifika students and so was interested to find effective strategies which would engage the students in the learning process and thus enable them to learn and to develop their potential. The significance of using a Year 2 teacher was that her perceptions might be generalised to other inexperienced teachers working in a cultural environment which was different to their own.

The researcher, Cheryl Harvey, was another participant in the research. She worked as an education adviser and so was using the research process to support the teacher in the classroom based on Bruner's premise that "What a person does is more important and revealing, and is scientifically more significant, than what the person says about what he or she is doing" (Bruner, 1990, p16).

METHODS – AND RATIONALE SUPPORTED BY REFERENCE TO LITERATURE

The researcher was using the research process to determine effective pedagogical practice for secondary students from a Pacific Island minority culture in the teaching/learning of poetic writing.

The teacher and researcher decided to focus on Level 1 English NCEA achievement standard 1.1 poetic writing, with the researcher teaching the set of ten lessons and the teacher observing student engagement and recording these observations in a log. These observations were then formally reflected upon during a structured interview (see Appendix II).

In order to ensure that the students were not disadvantaged the activity "*Creating a Character*" (this is a nationally written activity provided by the Ministry of Education on the TKI website to support the Level 1 English NCEA achievement standard 1.1 poetic writing) was adapted to suit Pasifika students (see Appendix III). The activity as written, provides no link for Pacific Island students to their culture or ways of knowing, thereby disadvantaging them. Thaman (1997:120) argues that Pacific Island students find themselves in educational environments that perpetuate cultural prejudices and blindness. This is supported by McCaffery and Tuafuti (1998:11) who argue that New Zealanders continue to believe that what works for native speakers is also suitable for bilingual/second language learners.

The purpose of the adaptation of the activity was to demonstrate that if an activity is carefully scaffolded and is geared towards the cultural backgrounds and understandings of the Pacific Island students, the students are more likely to be engaged in the task and so to achieve success. "Classrooms are places where students can bring 'who they are' to the learning interactions in complete safety, and their knowledges (including languages and language patterns) are 'acceptable' and 'legitimate'" (Bishop & Glynn 1999:162).

The contention is that it is not that the students do not have the linguistic ability to cope with the task, but rather the task has not been written to maximise the potential of the students' ability. Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (1994:65) argues that one of the most important factors is that the culture of the home that the Pacific Island students come from is incorporated and reflected in the culture of the schools that they attend. Taleni (1998:24) sees the cultural understanding of the students as a form of security, which protects them and also acts as a motivator, which enhances and motivates their learning.

Rather than beginning with the writing task itself, the researcher chose to begin by reading aloud an extract (see Appendix III) from a Sia Figiel novel. The reasons for this choice were two-fold. Firstly, if the students are given a bald statement of a writing task with no emotional engagement or preparation, they are likely to baulk at the task and stare at the blank piece of paper in an uninspired way. In other words, they have not engaged with the task. By giving a dramatic reading of an extract with which the students could identify, an aural delivery method was introduced which enhanced their level of enjoyment. "Diversity of delivery methods means the

involvement of all the senses and the 3 learning domains (affective, physical & mental)" (Pasikale 1998:107).

Secondly, the researcher had attended public readings given by Sia Figiel of her novels and had seen that the students identified strongly with her approach and her use of language. The students are empowered if they can use their own personal voice rather than trying to emulate a palagi style of writing.

Next the students filled in a grid (see Appendix III). In order to fill in the grid, the students needed to re-read the extract on their own and the grid guided them to concentrate on certain points in the writing. This was more effective than the teacher standing up the front verbally pointing out the words to be noticed. Once the students had successfully analysed the Pasifika model, they then chose a person they would like to write about (most chose the person next to them). Using the model, they filled in the grid with their own words to describe their chosen character. The less confident students stuck closely to the model and used words that were not much different. The more confident students broke away from the model and added in quirky pieces of their own. Note, however, that if I was to teach this set of lessons again, I would do more work on vocabulary so that the students' choices could be expanded.

Pasikale (1996:74) notes that Pacific Island learners place more emphasis on teacher empathy and the relevance of learning to their lives. The summative findings of Hawk et al (2001:16) across 3 separate research studies (primary, secondary, tertiary) stressed the importance of the relationship between teacher and student to the learning and achievement of Maori and Pasifika students.

Research has shown that the teacher / student interaction can improve the quality of students' writing especially if the teacher is encouraging, questioning and supporting students in their work. Where the student gets stuck, the teacher can question in a genuine way, showing an interest in the student's story so as to give the student confidence to commit words to the paper and then to move on. This kind of teaching practice which values the person first and the achievement and the behaviour second is supported by Thaman (1992:10) in her criticism of teacher educators who "have failed their teachers and their students through our continued overemphasis on teaching subjects rather than on the preparation of people who can meet the challenges of the contexts".

Once the students had filled out the grid, they were then ready to begin writing. This task differed from the original in that it did not introduce descriptive language or imagery until the students had an idea of where their writing was going. As in building a house, the students needed the firm foundations and skeletal structure before they could begin the process of padding out the writing. The skeletal structure was provided by the scaffolded paragraph structure (see Appendix III). At this stage, the students were referred back to the extract so that they could compare the structure written on the whiteboard to the structure in the model. This helped them move independently from one paragraph to the next.

I needed to intervene at the right moment aided the total engagement of every student in the process. Sometimes this involved the researcher encouraging the student to tell

the story orally as some students found it easier to verbalise their thoughts and then to write them down.

Only after the students had completed the skeletal structure were they able to think of figurative language, imagery, syntax and synonyms. Because they had the confidence of a semi-completed structure behind them, they were better able to think of changing and editing what they had done. By then introducing material by a different writer, John Pule (a Niuean writer), they were given a different perspective, which motivated them to move on again to the next stage.

The final editing is often difficult for students too, but for those who were told that they had almost achieved the standard and that proof reading was required to achieve, all that was needed was that last little push.

This study drew on data from several methods common in qualitative research – participant observation, focus groups and interview. The researcher taught the class in order to demonstrate the pedagogy of using cultural models of writing to the teacher and to enable the teacher to record observations and thoughts on student behaviours into a journal. The teacher and researcher then used these notes, combined with the researcher's reflections on the lesson, as a basis for post-lesson discussion.

Interview

The teacher recorded the students' engagement in the process using a log and then more formally reflected upon it in a structured interview (see Appendix II) with the researcher. This interview was conducted off-site in an office, which was conducive to the use of an audio tape recorder. The researcher made a transcript of the audiotape, which was then analysed, and the data categorised according to the research questions.

The teacher was very reflective and constantly compared what was happening in the classroom while the researcher was teaching the class to what had happened in the class prior to the research situation. This was recorded in notes in the log and discussed verbally with the researcher. Underlying this data on the achievement of Pasifika students in poetic writing was another equally important layer to do with teacher expectations, pedagogy and perceptive differences. This added a level of complexity commensurate with the job of teaching itself.

The twelve interview questions were formulated around the research questions themselves. Questions which centred around the engagement of Pasifika students in the reading and writing process using works of Pasifika writers included a question on the effect of reading aloud a Sia Figiel extract from "Up Where we Belong" and also the reading aloud of extracts from John Pule's "Burn My Head in Heaven". There was also a question on the overall effect of using Pasifika writers as models for student writing.

The next set of questions centred on the scaffolded teaching approach including the use of a grid, the use of a paragraph structure which mirrored that used in the Sia Figiel extract, the use of researcher prompting and questioning of individual students

to help focus and clarify their thinking for the creative writing process, and the use of peer critiquing through students reading their writing aloud to each other.

The final research question, concerning student use of strong personal voice in poetic writing, rested on sighting the evidence of the students' writing. The structured nature of the interview with prepared questions and a one-hour time limit kept the interview and following data analysis manageable.

Focus Groups

A sampling of six students was used in two focus groups so that comparative data could be analysed. These focus groups were facilitated by the researcher - one group was interviewed in an office and the other in the school playground away from the classroom. Students were also informally surveyed (by the teacher) to gauge their reactions to the lessons. The three focus group questions were centred on whether the students liked the extract chosen, whether the scaffolded teaching approach was helpful and whether the scaffolding should be modified for the future.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was collected from the teacher logbook and discussions with the researcher, from interviewing students in the focus groups, from interviewing the teacher and from the final summative writing produced by the students. The method of analysis used in the interview was firstly to listen to the interview tape right through to understand the general meaning and any inferences that were beginning to appear. Next, a transcription was made of the interview tape. From there, a line-by-line analysis was done which closely examined phrases, words, and sentences, dividing them into general units of meaning. The researcher found it beneficial to keep these units of meaning small as it aided the close analysis of the data. These units of meaning were then sorted under the research question headings.

MAIN FINDINGS

Because both the focus groups and the interview were structured, the findings grouped well around the research questions.

Are Year 11 Pasifika students more fully engaged in the reading and writing process when the works of Pasifika writers are read in the English classroom?

By analyzing the interview data, it was clear that the use of Pasifika writers helped the students engage in the initial process of the lesson "*I don't think there's any question at all that it hooks them*". Reading from the Sia Figiel extract settled the students because they liked it and it captured their interest. It empowered the students to use a Samoan writer as "*the majority of the class are Samoan and Tongan*" and they were familiar with the language. The students were further empowered by being asked to help with the pronunciation, which they responded to loudly and confidently. This changed the general class behaviour from being initially unfocused and unsettled to being settled and focused.

Does a scaffolded approach help low achieving Pasifika students produce poetic writing in the English classroom?

After the reading of the extract, a retrieval grid was used which encouraged students to find appropriate words in the text thus encouraging them to read the text for themselves. In both focus groups the students commented that the grid made their work easier. "*The grid made it easier because it had every main point that you needed to know. It helped you understand more about the character*".

The teacher too noted that the students liked the grid and found it really helpful. Sione, a student who could scarcely read, made a concerted effort to find the words in the text "*He really was hunting through that story wanting to find things and the only thing holding him up was the literacy not his enthusiasm*". The teacher also noted that the students who went on to complete the writing process were the ones who really liked the grid. This point was particularly significant when consideration is given to the fact that the students had done virtually no creative / poetic writing throughout the year.

The students then used the same grid to build the foundation for a description of a person of their own choice. Again, both the students and the teacher said that using the grid helped them. "*The grid helped for my character to think about what he's doing. There were certain questions you could apply to. It points out the main points compared to the character*" although the teacher felt that if the students had more time to become familiar with the structure they would take more risks and thus write more creatively. "*I noticed some of them were still being very safe with the way they were using the grid and replicating detail very very closely*".

The important thing, for the purposes of this research, was that students were using the grid, even those "*who wouldn't normally write anything down*". Putting the paragraph structure of the extract that had been read aloud on the whiteboard was very useful for the students too, especially once they discovered the link between the paragraph structure on the whiteboard and the paragraph structure in the extract. It seemed to make the idea of structure explicit for the students."*Good cos you can see the order and it made a lot of sense. I did a whole page and if it wasn't in sequence, I wouldn't do so much. You put down different ideas in different places and it doesn't add up*". The end result was "*there were five really good pieces of writing that came out of it probably another five plus that could be worked on and some that made the attempt but it was very sort of embryonic*". The teacher saw this as a huge leap for the students who had been given writing tasks in the past "*that don't appear to stretch them quite so much*".

Are Year 11 Pasifika students more likely to produce poetic writing with a strong personal voice when the works of Pasifika writers are used as models in the English classroom?

The teacher felt that in comparing the writing that the students had done earlier in the year to the writing that they were presenting for this research there was a noticeable difference "*there's a different sense to it*". The students wrote in a way that was so personal that they didn't want anyone to see their work before they had finished it.

"*Some of them were more shy than others. They were so busy covering their work up and what they've written is quite personal and a lot of them wrote about each other*".

One boy wrote about his father "I used my father and so I knew everything from the start". Another chose someone sitting next to them "*I chose someone in the class and asked her questions*". Some of the students were keen to share their work with each other and read their work aloud to each other. "*I think you said at the time they're noisy writers because they are talking and sharing ideas as they write*". So the way the students wrote, the process they used was a very interpersonal one and this affected the style of their writing, which included personal details and examples. This could have been encouraged by the personal style of the writer / model they were using or it could have been a result of the freer pedagogical process they were involved in. "*The environment was reasonably chaotic and the students moved around a lot. There was actually a lot of physical movement over the days that you came in as they got into the process they chose to go and sit together because they often talk and share what they're doing*".

SUMMARY

This research study explored the use of Pasifika writers as models for students to use for the creative writing achievement standard 1.1. Even though the research was conducted on a small scale with one class, it seemed to suggest that using the works of Pasifika writers was beneficial to both teacher and students. "I personally think it indicates a respect for the ethnicity of Pacific children if you're introducing writings from their own ethnic group (teacher).

The research also investigated the use of scaffolded learning techniques to support students having difficulty with the writing process. Students indicated that the use of structured formats was helpful in producing creative writing. This lends support to *Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD)*

where the range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone.

"*I think just making that link between teacher and student is relevant. That's something I saw then*" (teacher).

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this research centre around the choice of texts used with Pasifika students in English classrooms and the use of scaffolding as a literacy strategy. The students in this study responded well to writers from the Samoan and Tongan cultures. The familiarity of the background and the culture supported the students to use their own experience in a way that strengthened their writing both in the amount of writing that they produced and in the type of writing that they produced. The use of scaffolding gave the students a way in to the writing process which got them beyond the blank page to successful completion of a piece of creative writing.

Many Pasifika students have difficulties with reading and writing but the difficulties may be more to do with student confidence than student ability. Teachers need to

motivate students with stimulus material and models that will engage the students in a positive and constructive way and then scaffold the writing process in a way that will enable the students to develop their potential.

Implications for NCEA that came from this research are to do with making or adapting existing activities written for achievement standards so that they become culturally relevant for students. Pasifika students are not succeeding as well as palagi students in schools and in school qualifications. This could be due to a lack of culturally relevant texts and practices.

Other implications to come from this research are to do with the teacher / researcher relationship. This study developed from the researcher's advisory role in supporting teachers in the classroom. By capitalising on this practice, the researcher was able to take on the role of the observed rather than as observer and the teacher was then able to reflect in the journal on the modelling of good practice and also on researcher / student and classroom interactions. It is rare that teachers have the opportunity to be objective in their own classrooms or to engage in reflective practice. This has implications for teacher professional development.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT

The main limitation was the use of only one class for this research. This was due to availability of time. It has meant that findings cannot easily be generalised but rather remain specific to this one brief event. Time also meant that the students in the focus groups could not be adequately trained, nor did they have time to develop a relationship of trust with the researcher. The data produced from the focus groups was sparse although triangulation could still be made with the teacher interview. The teacher was interviewed once. The interview was structured and so the data fell neatly around the research questions. A second less structured interview could have yielded more interesting data.

WHERE TO NEXT?

The next stage for this research could be to work with a Year 11 class in creative writing over a longer period of time. This would enable comparisons of stimulus materials and models and also show development of skills over time. It would be possible then to gradually reduce the scaffolding and to see whether students became more confidently independent in their writing.

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Appendix I

Criteria Used for Assessment of Poetic Writing, Ncea, Level 1 (Ministry of Education: TKI Website)

Achievement Criteria

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
• Express idea(s) with detail in a piece of creative writing.	• Develop idea(s) with detail in a piece of creative writing.	• Develop idea(s) convincingly with detail in a piece of creative writing.
• Use a writing style appropriate to audience, purpose and text type.	• Use a controlled writing style appropriate to audience, purpose and text type.	• Use a controlled writing style appropriate to audience, purpose and text type, and which commands attention.
• Structure material in a way that is appropriate to audience, purpose and text type.	• Structure material clearly in a way that is appropriate to audience, purpose and text type.	• Structure material clearly and effectively in a way that is appropriate to audience, purpose and text type.
• Use writing conventions without intrusive errors.	• Use writing conventions accurately.	• Use writing conventions accurately

Appendix II

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Briefly describe the makeup of the Year 11 class
2. What sort of writing have they done so far this year
3. What was the effect on the class of reading aloud the Sia Figiel extract?
4. How do you feel they worked with the grid using the Sia Figiel extract?
5. Do you think they made the links between using the grid for this extract and then using the grid to write about their chosen person?
6. How useful was the extract / paragraph structure on the whiteboard?
7. Did the students make the links between the structure on the whiteboard and the structure of the Sia Figiel extract? Did this make the writing process clearer for them?
8. After the reading aloud of the John Pule descriptive extracts, were the students encouraged to change their writing?
9. What do you think was the overall effect of using Pasifika writers as models for the students?
10. What effect did the teacher prompting / questioning have on individual student's writing?
11. Some students read their work aloud to others. Is this a usual practice in the classroom?
12. What other comments would you like to make?

Appendix III

Activity for Year 11 Pasifika Students adapted by Cheryl Harvey in Conjunction with a Teacher and Class, 2002.

Task One

Read aloud the following extract from " Where We Once Belonged" – Sia Figiel

"Employed somehow' is John the Malaefou bus-driver, whose birth name is Misiluki Sausaunoa but everyone calls him Johnny – Johnny Boy sometimes because he is the busiest bus-driver in the whole of Apia. Johnny Boy is busy and he smokes Malapolo. Johnny Boy is busy and he worships John Wayne.

John Wayne rules his universe. Especially dressed up all cowboy-style, sherrif-style, with a pin on his right breast. John Wayne is cool….next to high school girls and a playboy pin-up of Miss September, hidden on the bottom of the money box where passengers deposit fares for themselves and their pigs and chickens and fish. Johnny Boy has charm, too. A big smile, too. A big head. And is busy, too … because he has the shortest route a bus could ever wish for and the best music a bus could ever wish for, too. The shortest route hits all the major landmarks in Apia: Beach Road, the clock, the bank, Post Office, reclaimed area, Old Market, Aggie Grey's, Vaisigano, the wharf, Malaefou, Vaiala, Malaetuai, Vaisigano, aggie Grey's, back to the Maketi-Fou to the Makeki Fou, blasting the newest 'Islands in the stream' from Kenny Rogers, blasting Julio Iglesias 'Moonlight Lady' and an occasional Christmas carol in July.

Johnny Boy wears his charm in Reebok shoes, polyester socks that say 'Addidas' around the ankles, blue shorts, too ('Made in Taiwan'). He has a picture of an eagle fighting a snake with the words: 'You Are My Heart 4 – Eva Jane' tattooed into his right arm, below where the arms of his T-shirt end.

Across his right elbow is his social security number: '444-3-T-R-U-S-T-M-E' tattooed in red. His muscles bumping-bumping under music sweat. His muscles bumping-bumping to the teeth of pretty hopeful girls … hopeful because they hope to sit on the seat, next to the busiest bus driver in town, and maybe feel his bumping – bumping American Samoa music muscles.

The clouds in the sky look down at him. They look-look-look with pain. The clouds in the sky are pregnant, too. Rain hasn't visited the town in months. You know this in the way people show their teeth, in the way dogs wag their tails, in the way pulu leaves fall.

Task Two

Fill in the grid below with details from the extract.

Task Three

- Choose a person you wish to describe.

- It could be a friend, relative, or someone you admire.
- Fill in the grid below (column 3) with details of your chosen person

Detail	Example	My Example
Name		
Birth Name		
Nickname		
Occupation		
Bad Habit		
Favourite Movie Star		
Dresses up in		
Characteristics		
Describe the Job		
Listens to (Music)		
Wears		
Birth Mark / Tattoo		
Physical		
Others See Him as		

Task Four

- Use the following structure (on the whiteboard) from the extract which was read aloud as a model for your writing.
- Write 4 paragraphs, using the details from the grid, and the structure on the whiteboard.
- Use the extract to help you order your ideas.

Paragraph Structure

Paragraph One
Introduce character – name, job, habits, hero

Paragraph Two
Describe the character at work or school. Describe clothes and appearance

Paragraph Three
Tell a story that happened in which the character played a major part.

Paragraph Four
Sum up the essential things about the character

Task Five

Description
Read aloud the following short extracts from "Burn My Head in Heaven" John Pule

Lamahina
Lamahina was a woman of striking beauty and an earthiness similar to the land. Black healthy hair that grew down past her shoulders. Her eyes, they say, changed in the afternoon after I was born, from containing the world in a small way to encompassing the universe. Her skin was the same colour as the seeds of the loku. She was born at Tulumea and as the eldest was given the task of leadership at an early age. At seven her first job was to feed the pigs. She was given to the childless couple, Toaheulu and Mokamau. She cared for them in their old age, fetching water, gathering wood, hunting and supporting them at different times at village functions.

Mataila
It was early evening when the dance group arrived at Nogi's, still angry at what happened. It was the topic of discussion as it has happened to other Islanders. Just walking along the streets, and they were stopped, searched, questioned and sometimes kept in the cells overnight. Some fuata, men and women, fight back. Jack and Mila fought back, especially Mila. A swarm of bees lived in her heart and shark's teeth at the end of her claws. The cop was bloodied. She was in jail for two nights.

Discuss the use of description.
Underline the comparisons.
See if you can include some descriptive language and comparisons in your own work.

Task Six

Read your work aloud to a partner or teacher.
Change what you think didn't sound right
Ask your partner what should be changed

Task Seven

Edit your work (the teacher will help by underlining words etc that need changing eg spelling / grammar)

Read over your writing and make sure you have included:

1. *details*
2. *adjectives and / or description*
3. *similes, metaphors, comparisons*
4. *a variety of words (some can be changed by using a thesaurus)*

5. *sentences which begin in different ways*
6. *paragraphs*
7. *links from one paragraph to the next*
8. *introduction and conclusion*
9. *title*

You are now ready to hand in your work to be assessed
Your work is now ready for publication

The extract from "Where We Once Belonged" is used with permission from Pasifika.