



Tautai o le Moana - Wayfinders of the Ocean

'Strengthening your leadership lens' to improve outcomes for learners.

Helen Varney & Sepora Mauigoa

NZPF, 2025





What anchors your leadership lens?

Kia hora te marino
Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana
Hei huarahi mā tātou i te rangi nei
Aroha atu, aroha mai
Tātou i a tātou katoa
Hui e! Tāiki e!

Let's set the scene

What anchors you?

Draw your anchor.

Share your anchor.

What use are our anchors?

Offer
stability

Provide a time to take stock, recalibrate

Provide
beginning points

Acts as a
foundation

Offers a place to rest

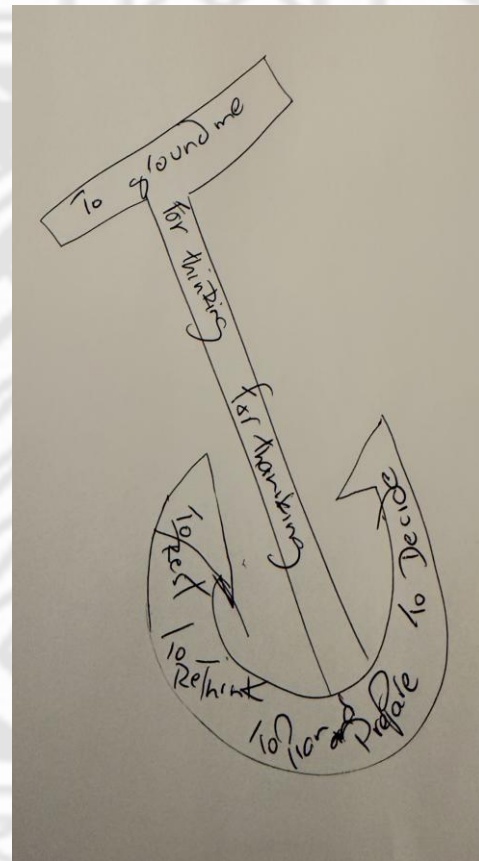
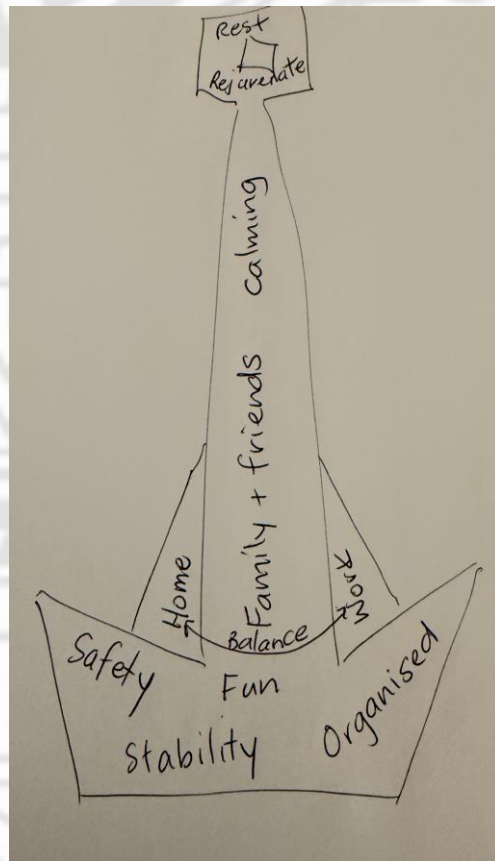
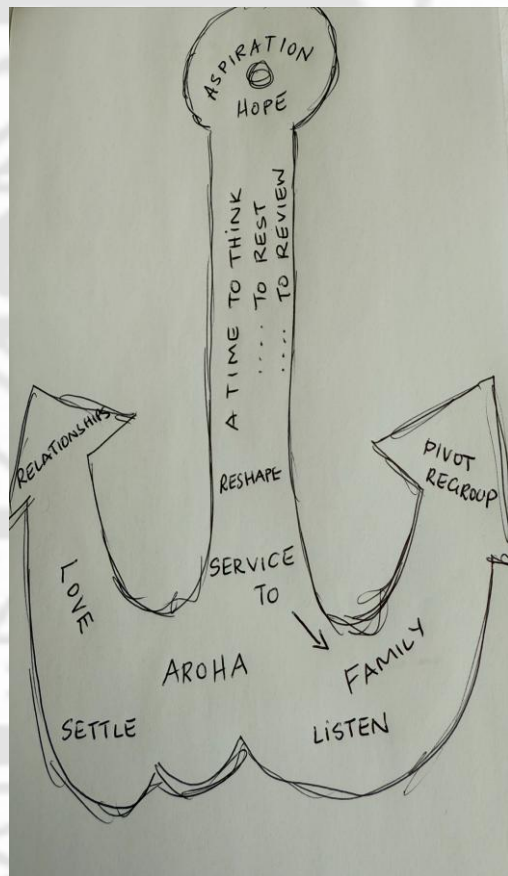
Give us space to
think about our
position

Are our anchors the same?

Do our anchors need to be the same?

What could it mean if our
anchors are different?







A canoe without an anchor is at
the mercy of the waves.

What grounds you in a storm?





My anchors



Family

Faith

Future

Love - Alofa

O ai a'u? Ko wai au?

Sepora Georgina Mauigoa

Aotearoa-Ponsonby, Avondale, Port Waikato
Samoa-Samatau, Sato'alepai, Safotu, Vaigaga

Sone, Matai'a, Mauigoa, Teleiai, Fonoti



What values have anchored our aiga?

Fa'amaoni



Fealofani



Fa'amalosi



Faith

Fa'amagalo

**Fa'atino
Le Alofa**

Fa'aaloalo

Think about the leadership decisions you
make - do your anchors play a part?
How? Why?

We are what we remember or what we want to
remember

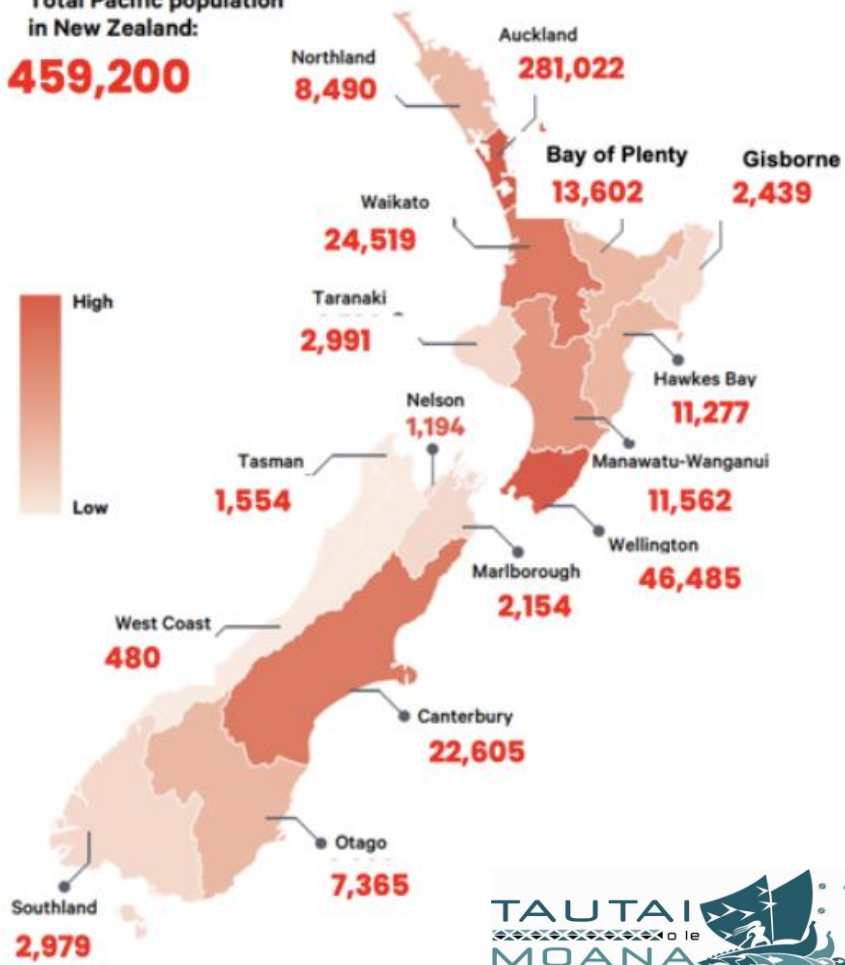
Albert Wendt



Why are our anchors important?

Total Pacific population
in New Zealand:

459,200



Pacific Populations: Diverse, Youthful & Multiethnic

- 459,200 people in NZ (9.0% of the population)*
- Over the next 20 years, Pacific will increase from:
 - 9% to 11% of the total population
 - 14% to 19% of children aged 0-14
- 40% of Pacific peoples identify with more than one ethnic group, and this is increasing :

<15y	15-49y	≥50y
54%	32%	13%

- Median age 23.4 (vs 41.4 for Europeans)
- 34% aged 0-14 (vs 18% of Europeans)
- 5% aged 65+ (vs 18% of Europeans)

*NZ population from 2022-base national population projections released 27 July 2022

The 7 largest Pacific groups (% of Pacific):

Samoan	48%
Tongan	22%
Cook Islands	21%
Niuean	8%
Fijian	5%
Tokelauan	2%
Tuvaluan	1%

Expected changes over the next 20 years:

Year	% Pacific	Multi Ethnic Index	% Samoan
2022	9.0%	1.144	48.7%
2042	11.1%	1.243	50.4%

How can our anchors support us?

When are you an anchor for others? How?





An anchor for others.

Anchoring our lens'





Our anchors help us with new expectations...

Knowledge Rich
Curriculum

Smarter assessment
& reporting

Better approach to
literacy and
numeracy

Improved teacher
training

Stronger learning
support

Greater use of data

Government 6 Education Priorities

Using our Anchor to..... connect details

Clearer Curriculum	Better approach to literacy and numeracy	Smarter assessment & reporting	Stronger learning support	Improved teacher training	Greater use of data
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 Key Shift 1:	 Key Shift 2:	 Key Shift 3:	 Key Shift 4:	 Key Shift 5:
Work reciprocally with diverse Pacific communities to respond to unmet needs, including growing and supporting Pacific bilingual and immersion education pathways	Confront systemic racism and discrimination in education	Enable every teacher, leader and educational professional to take coordinated action to become culturally competent with diverse Pacific learners	Partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so aspirations for learning and employment can be met	Grow, retain and value highly competent teachers, leaders and educational professionals of diverse Pacific heritages

Turu 1: Identities, languages and cultures

Demonstrate awareness of the diverse and ethnic-specific identities, languages and cultures of Pacific learners.

Turu 2: Collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours

Establishes and maintains collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours that enhance learning and wellbeing for Pacific learners.

Turu 3: Effective pedagogies for Pacific learners

Implements pedagogical approaches that are effective for Pacific learners.

The Wayfinder Frame

- an anchor of support



Reading the signs



Making Adjustments



Drawing on multiple knowledges



Recalibrating



The Wayfinder

"Our ancestral Wayfinders,
masters of the sea, guided
by stars and nature, left a
legacy of roots, intuition,
and resilience."

Our anchor is strengthened by values, languages, cultures and Identities

Falefa'atufugaga Leadership Framework Inquiry Model 2025

Enacting Alofa/Ofa

Enacting love languages / When the flow of Alofa (Atu and Mai) is affected you need to Teu le Vā / Talanoa - undo the knot / Ka-Lofa vs Alofa.

Tautua - Service- Service in Leadership	Vā-Relational Space - Relational leadership	Atamai-Wisdom in Action- Leadership intelligence	Mana reo, Mana tikanga Honouring heritage - Bi-lingual leadership
By embodying the principles of service in leadership, you can create a culture of empowerment, collaboration, and collective well-being within your organisation or community	These actions reflect a commitment to fostering relational well-being and creating spaces where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to collective goals.	These actions embody the spirit of Atamai by promoting wisdom in action, holistic well-being, and collective flourishing.	By incorporating these actions into leadership practices, you can honour heritage, empower individuals, and contribute to the preservation and revitalization of cultural and linguistic traditions

Our values are anchors.....

Tautua

Tautua mamao, tautua
matalilo, tautua upu



What types of service do you do? How do you serve in your role?

Vā Fealoa'i-relational space



How do you nurture the vā in your kura?

Respectful boundary between people.
Vā fealoa'i exists between you and many
groups of people e.g. siblings, parents,
partners, children, parents, work colleagues.

Vā is power, growth, mana, harmony.

Atamai-wisdom in action

In many Pacific cultures Atamai can mean practical wisdom, problem-solving skills and understanding of cultural traditions.



How do you recognise and utilise Atamai in your kura?

Mana Reo, Mana Tikanga

What do these words mean to you and your leadership?



“Toku reo, toku ohoooho ; Taku mapihi maurea”

My language, my strength; my window of opportunity.”

Understanding whakapapa - we walk into the future looking back

Words you use will be mana/mala
The words you use have power.

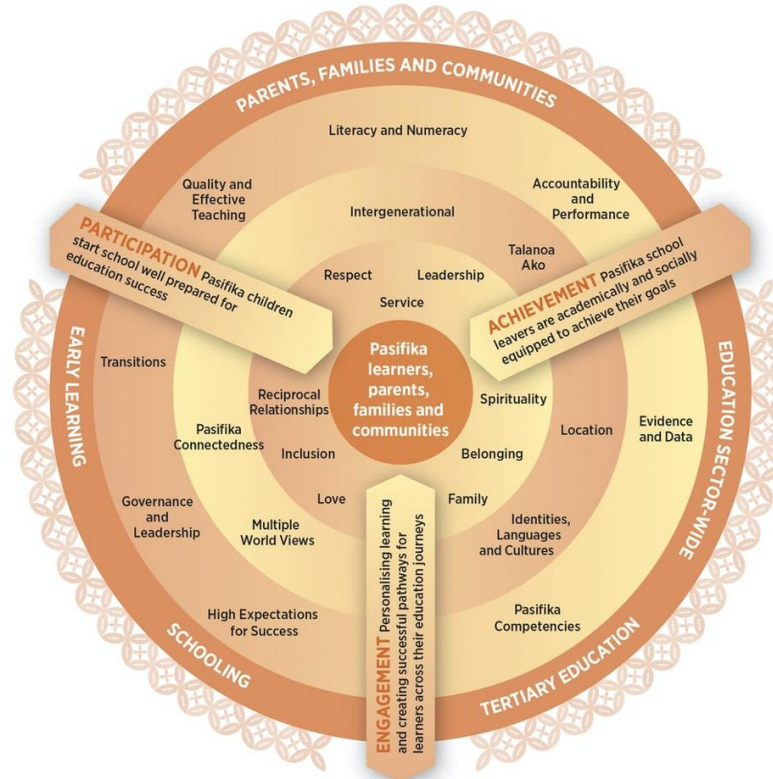
S.O.L

If we understand how people learn, we can improve teaching and learning.

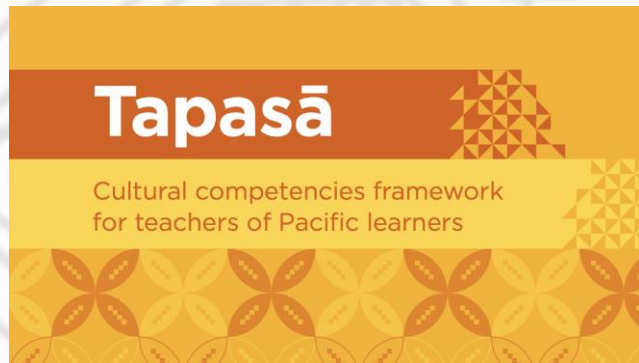


Our Cultural lens is vital to our teaching and for our tamaiti in their learning

Anchoring our cultural compass



Anchoring dreams and aspirations.



Tapasā an anchor for our
Cultural competencies

Turu 1: Identities, languages and cultures

- What do students love to do?
- What ethnicities do they identify with?
- What languages do they hear at home?
- Are there any cultural protocols or routines at home that have been shared with you e.g. around food?
- How do you gather this information?



Turu 2: Collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviour

- How do you build reciprocal partnerships with Pacific learners?
- How do you build strong relationships and collaborate with parents, families, and communities?
- How do your staff build relationships with each other, their students?



Turu 3: Effective Pacific Pedagogies

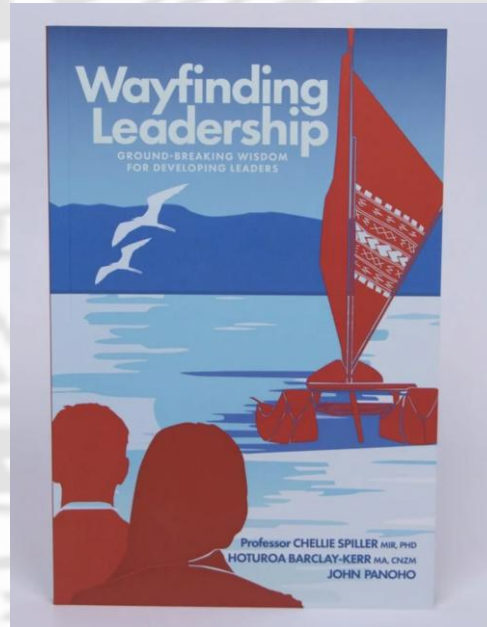
What Pacific pedagogies do you already use?

Are you anchoring your leadership in identity? Anchoring new knowledge to learners' identities/ gafa/whakapapa, and lived experiences so they see themselves in the school, classroom, curriculum?

Are there opportunities for collective learning?



Our anchor is strengthened by our knowledge



What do you do to strengthen your anchor?

What are the outcomes of building languages, identities and cultures to strengthen the anchors of your journey?

- Engagement
- Attendance
- Achievement

Engagement

- Build trust and emotional safety - Learners feel seen, heard, and valued.
- Acknowledge cultural identity - Learners increase willingness to participate and contribute
- Strengthen content that reflects their realities and interests - Learners connect
- Strengthen culture as a legitimate source of knowledge - Learners feel empowered
- Seek voice - Student voice drives improvements, increasing ownership of their learning journey.

Attendance

- Students are more likely to attend regularly when they feel a genuine sense of belonging.
- Families are more engaged with the school when they see teachers valuing their child's culture
- Students are motivated to come to class when the environment feels inclusive and affirming
- Community connection enhances school pride and learner identity—students feel school reflects *who they are*.
- Feedback loops ensure that school remains a relevant and welcoming space.

Success

- When students' identities are affirmed, their confidence grows—leading to deeper learning and improved outcomes.
- Teachers identify early barriers to learning through listening and responding supportively and appropriately.
- Differentiated and culturally responsive teaching boosts understanding and retention.
- Learners achieve more when knowledge is co-constructed
- Data-informed and culturally sustaining practices close the gap and raise achievement for Pasifika learners.
- Regular recalibration ensures systems evolve alongside learner needs and aspirations.

What is Tautai o le Moana?

Tautai o le Moana is a professional learning and development pathway 'by Pasifika principals, for principals of Pasifika learners' focused on changing educational outcomes for Pasifika/Pacific students.

Our Vision

To strengthen Leadership capabilities
to improve outcomes for Pasifika learners;
and contribute to linguistically and culturally sustainable practices across
Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tautai o le Moana is supported by NZPPA, NZPF and the MOE



“My anchors support me to strengthen my leadership to grow myself for others.”

Meritiana MacShane
NZEI conference 2025