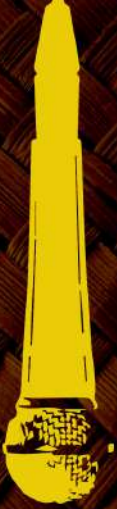




ACTION ED

HE REO RANGATAHI,
HE AO HURIHURI



SAY IT HOW YOU KNOW IT

***USING SPOKEN WORD TO BUILD SAMOAN
AND TONGAN LANGUAGE ENRICHMENT***



Ministry for
Pacific Peoples

Copyright 2026 © Action Education
Prepared by Eric Soakai





SAY IT HOW YOU KNOW IT:

USING SPOKEN WORD TO BUILD SAMOAN AND TONGAN LANGUAGE ENRICHMENT

CONTENTS

Foreword	2
<i>Why Spoken Word?</i>	2
<i>Through Spoken Word, Language is not abstract</i>	3
<i>Who we are: Action Ed</i>	3
 Theoretical Foundations and Programme Logic	 4
<i>The Kakala Framework</i>	5
<i>Who is this resource for?</i>	6
<i>Facilitator Stance</i>	6
 Steering Group	 7-8
 Module 1: Origins	 9
 Module 2: Kavenga	 13
 Module 3: Fānua	 19
 Module 4: Vā	 25
 Module 5: Vaka	 31
 Module 6: Alofa	 35
 Final facilitator notes	 38
 Appendix A: Poems and Visual Support	 39
 Appendic B: Word Banks	 46
 References	 50
 Assessment & Curriculum Alignment	 51



FOREWORD



In Aotearoa today, Samoan and Tongan youth carry deep reserves of cultural pride, resilience, creativity, and story. They also carry inherited silences — moments where heritage language has been interrupted, discouraged, or rendered distant by schooling, migration, and the pressures of survival in diaspora. This is best evidenced by a Te Hononga Akoranga COMET 2025 publication, A Samoan and Tongan Snapshot which reports that only 53% of Samoans and 39% of Tongans living in Tāmaki Makaurau can hold a conversation in their heritage language. Compare this with the 2013 data sets that tell us 57% for the Samoan population, and 54% of the Tongan population could hold conversations in their heritage language and there is a clear decline in the rate of bilingualism amongst not just Samoan & Tongan youth, but the population at large. Paradoxically, what we know from our experience working with Samoan and Tongan youth over the years is that they speak of pride in who they are alongside shame, hesitation, or fear about using their ancestral languages. This programme begins from the position that these tensions are not failures of our Samoan and Tongan youth, but the result of historical, relational, and structural conditions.

SAY IT HOW YOU KNOW IT responds to this reality by offering a six-module spoken-word-based language learning journey that prioritises safety, relationship, embodiment, and confidence over correction and fluency. Across six sessions, participants move from grounding identity, to examining expectation and responsibility, to reconnecting with place and relationship, and finally toward confident, self-directed use of heritage language in both intimate and public contexts.

Modules 1-4 intentionally establish the foundations. They are designed to give permission, so that participants are allowed to speak imperfectly, to hold partial knowledge, and to recognise that culture and language are already present within the self.

We know through our extensive years of developing youth through the power of spoken word that language is first encountered through sound, rhythm, story, and metaphor before accuracy is ever asked for.

Importantly, Modules 5-6 then build forward momentum, inviting participants to deepen their language use, navigate collective voice, and choose how and when their words are shared beyond the group.

This programme understands language revitalisation not as the recovery of something lost, but as the strengthening of something living. Spoken word offers a pathway where language can return through the body, through emotion, through relationship, and through joy.

WRITTEN BY ZECH SOAKAI
PROGRAMME DESIGNER

WHY SPOKEN WORD?

For Samoan and Tongan communities, and Pasifika communities at large, spoken word is not new. It sits alongside oratory, chant, prayer, storytelling, sermon, and song. There are many other indigenous forms and practices; however, it is most important to highlight that all these forms have always carried language forward.

In this programme, spoken word is not treated simply as performance poetry, but as a pedagogical approach that centres voice, embodiment, repetition, audience, and purpose.

THROUGH SPOKEN WORD, LANGUAGE IS NOT ABSTRACT.

It is felt in breath, heard in rhythm, shaped by movement, and strengthened through collective response. This makes it particularly powerful for Samoan and Tongan youth in diaspora, many of whom may understand more than they can speak, or feel more confident writing than talking. Spoken word allows participants to move fluidly between English and heritage languages without apology, explanation, or compulsory translation.

WHO WE ARE: ACTION ED

Action Ed has been working with rangatahi across Aotearoa for over four decades, using spoken word as a catalyst for creativity, confidence, identity, and connection. We believe that young people have powerful voices that deserve safe and sacred spaces to be heard, and that storytelling through poetry and performance can unlock personal growth, community belonging, and social change. Our programmes have supported thousands of young people to explore their truths and express their stories without judgement.

We are an independent, community-based charity led by skilled poets, facilitators, and youth workers who walk alongside young people with respect, warmth, and cultural humility. Our work sits at the intersection of arts, education, and wellbeing, offering platforms where creative expression becomes both a journey of personal discovery and a vehicle for community empowerment. As an organisation that works deeply with young people we work to critically and non-judgementally listen to their voices, champion their stories, and support their growth.

Action Ed is honoured to offer this facilitator's guide in partnership with educators, community workers, and families committed to Samoan and Tongan language revitalisation. We would like to say a massive fa'afetai tele lava & mālō 'aupito to those who have contributed to this resource and journeyed along side us to bring it into fruition – **Reverend Mu'a Strickson Pu'a, Pakilau o Aotearoa Manase Lua, Mark Palepoi Esekielu, Zechariah Soakai, Luani Nansen, Mahalia Salesa, Koko Telfer, Mercy Lauesi, Sala'ivao Lastman So'oula, Marina Alefosio, Logoitumua To'asavili Tuputala, Langiola Tonga, Mark Tima, Jesse Tima, Jesse Gibson, Kaloni Luau**

We would also like to thank the Ministry for Pacific People for their continued support and commitment to art, culture, and youth; and the intersection they meet at. This resource would not be possible if not for your generosity.



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS & PROGRAMME LOGIC

This resource is grounded in both Western language-learning theory and Pacific Indigenous knowledge systems, woven together to support language learning that is relational, embodied, and culturally accountable.



THE CLASSROOM AS A METAPHORICAL CANOE

The learning space is understood as a canoe. Learning is collective, rhythmic, and relational. Facilitators act as navigators — responsible for direction, safety, and responsiveness — while participants are paddlers whose voices and timing shape the journey. Progress depends on listening, coordination, and shared responsibility rather than competition or speed.



OUR SEA OF ISLANDS

Samoan and Tongan youth are positioned as oceanic people rather than culturally fragmented or lacking. Heritage language is understood as mobile and adaptive, capable of travelling across generations and geographies. The mixing of languages is framed not as loss, but as continuity and survival.



THE KAKALA FRAMEWORK



The six modules collectively follow the Kakala process:

TOLI (GATHERING):

Modules 1–2 gather memories, values, expectations, and fragments of language.

TUI (WEAVING):

Modules 3–4 shape these into perspective, relationship, and early bilingual expression.

LUVA (GIFTING):

Modules 5–6 invite sharing — first internally, then optionally outward — returning language to community.

WESTERN LANGUAGE THEORIES SIT ALONGSIDE THIS FRAMEWORK:

INNATISM:

Learners already carry linguistic capacity.

BEHAVIOURISM:

Repetition builds confidence when practised collectively.

INTERACTIONISM:

Language grows through use, audience, and response.

Together, these perspectives reinforce a central principle of this programme: language lives on through relationship.

However, this isn't just an academic booklet. While weaving together indigenous theorists and western schools of thought on language learning, this resource is also the culmination of our years of learning as we reflect on our service of Samoan & Tongan youth, and also the embedded wisdom of our Pacific Steering Group who provided crucial external advice throughout different feedback stages for our project team who brought this resource together. For more detailed info about the contributors please see the contributors section of this resource, and our Methods section.

WHO THIS RESOURCE IS FOR



This resource is for facilitators, teachers, youth workers, and community members who are ready to journey with Samoan and Tongan youth over up to eight weeks — not just to help them learn language, but to feel, speak, live, and reclaim it.

It is for those who see language as a living practice of identity, connection, and belonging; for those who are committed to creating safe and creative spaces where young voices are nurtured and celebrated; for those who know that language learning can be joyful, relational, and co-creative; and for those who understand that when a young person finds their voice in their heritage language, they also find themselves more fully in the world.

We invite you to walk with the Samoan and Tongan youth you serve, as they speak who they are, where they come from, and where they will go — through rhythm, story, performance, reflection, and collective practice. In doing so, we know our work and this resource will not only nurture language skills but language life.

Let the voices of our young people be the river through which language flows forward.

— *Action Ed.*

FACILITATOR STANCE

Facilitators do not need to be fluent. What is required is relational presence, consistency, and a willingness to be brave with language.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- No public correction of pronunciation
- No compulsory translation
- Model imperfection and risk-taking
- Affirm courage over accuracy
- Allow participants to choose how far and how publicly they share

Language belongs to the group, not to the facilitator.

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAMME

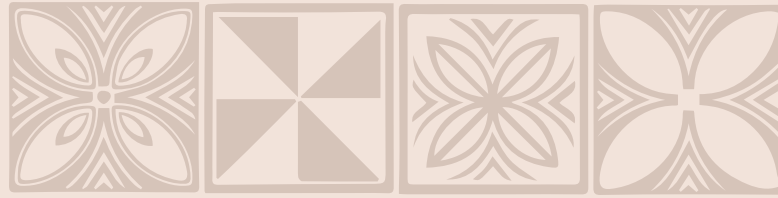
This programme is designed so that language learning happens through use, sound, repetition, and social meaning-making, not through testing or correction. Word banks, proverbs, and sayings are provided throughout, with English translations where appropriate. Use them as frequently as needed and integrate them naturally into your sessions.

That said, we strongly recommend encouraging participants to draw on their own prior knowledge, and on their families and communities, as living resources. Organic, relational word-building will always produce richer and more lasting language enrichment than any printed list can.

Each module is designed for a 90-minute session. Where time is limited, asterisked activities (*) indicate those most essential to the session's core learning. Because each activity scaffolds the next, facilitators should use their professional judgement about which elements will best serve their particular group, rather than treating the asterisks as a fixed shortlist and timings suggested as mandatory.

For educators in particular, curriculum alignment notes linking this programme to the NZ Curriculum are included at the back of this resource. These are intended as starting points for your planning, not as exhaustive mappings. Treat them accordingly.

STEERING GROUP



REVEREND MUA STRICKSON-PUA

Gafa Whakapapa: Mua Strickson-Pua, Aiga Pua, PapaSataua Savaii Sāmoa. Laiman family, Canton, China. Aiga Purcell, Malaela Aleipata, Upolu, Sāmoa. Purcell family, Ireland & France. Linda Strickson-Pua, Strickson family, Peterborough, Fulham, London, England. Hull family. First generation NZ Born Grey Lynn Sāmoan. Ngati Hamoa Niu Sila Aotearoa. First generation NZ-born Nelson English Ngati Palagi Pakeha Neuw Zeeland. Children of the migration, our Diaspora generation.

Faletua, Linda Strickson-Pua & Faifeau, Mua Strickson-Pua have shared 35 years of Ordained Ministry. 32 years in Non-Stipendiary Ministry and 44 years of Pasifika community Development come Fa'atuatua Hope Ministry.

Rev. Mua is the co-founder of Street Poets Black 1982. Published Poemetary Fatu Solo, exhibited Lavalava artist, Pasifika Urban Street Historian, Multimedia practitioner: radio, newspaper, TV series, documentaries and films. Fa'atuatua Hope Ministry covers Arts, Sports, Unions, Education, Fa'afafine LGBTQ communities, Gangs and political activism. Fa'avae Tautua Galuega to Tikanga Whakapapa Kaupapa Mahi. Atua's Fa' amanuiaga Manaakitanga.



PAKILAU O AOTEAROA MANASE LUA

BA, MA (Hons) Pacific Lead (GLE) & Ringa Huti Punga - Pacific Equity Lead (WISE Group)

He is the Pacific Equity Lead for the WISE Group and supports the CE's and teams at Le Va and Te Pou. He is also the Pacific Lead for the Global Leadership Exchange (GLE) and an Executive member of the Pacific Leadership Forum (NZ). Manase is a fully installed Matāpule or Talking Chief, cultural advisor and knowledge holder for his Chief Lord Ma'afu of Vaini and Tokomololo in the Kingdom of Tonga. He is a Pacific community leader and advocate serving on several governance roles with Pacific community NGO's such as Fonua Ola, Akihehuo and Tatupu Trust. He is married to Folola Vaiongofo Lua from Foa and Nukunuku, and they

have four now adult children Siosifa, Alvina, Sela Mounu and Moses. Manase is proud to also have genealogical connections to Samoa (Safotulafai, Manono and Safata) and to the Lau Group in Fiji. He was born in Tonga but migrated to Aotearoa during the dawn raids era.



MARK PALEPOI ESEKIEU

Mark Palepoi Esekiele, a child of Letogo and Fasito'otai in Samoa, born and growing in the fertile lands of Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa. Mark's childhood of transplanted Sāmoans in 70's Aotearoa with church, school and sport has laid a pathway for a career in social services, youth development and mental health/addictions.

Mark has four children with three sharing tangata whenua whakapapa with their mother and Mark's wife Cherie. They live in Tamaki Makaurau with more pets than kids. One muagagana that Mark uses is "E tu manu ae lē tu logologo" even birds pause but guidance/learning/communication does not.



ZECH SOAKAI

Zech Soakai is of Sāmoan & Tongan descent. He is a storyteller who writes to capture the laughter, grit and complexity of his communities. An experienced educator, facilitator and learning designer — his work sits in the intersections of: creativity, research, education & community.



MAHALIA

Mahalia is a Tongan (Lotofoa, Tefisi, Kolofo’ou, Pea, Ma’ufanga), Sāmoan (Satapuala, Neiafu, Falealupo) and English (Wintringham) spoken word poet, student and artist raised in Tāmaki Makaurau.



KOKO

Born and raised in South Auckland, Koko is a proud queer Pasifika poet hailing from the lands of Upolu, Sāmoa, Niue and Scotland. Koko is a Word – The Front Line alumni and has since performed on stages all across Tāmaki Makaurau, using their poetry as a tool to uplift their communities while telling tales of being afakasi, diaspora, grief & highlighting the joy in their people.



LUANI NANSEN

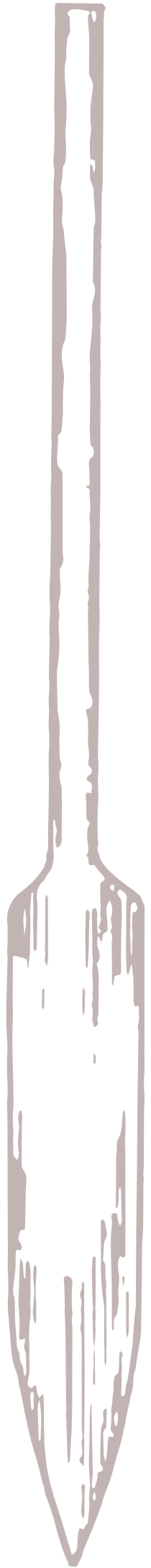
Luani Nansen (He/Him), a.k.a. nualān, is a Sāmoan Poet, Guitarist, DJ, Emcee, and Producer born and raised in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa. His villages in Sāmoa are Vaiusu, Falese’elā, Satapuala, Lau’i’i and Apolima Tai.

Since his departure from De La Salle College in 2020, Luani has worked with community arts-based groups such as Action Education and Te Karanga Trust. Within these spaces, Luani has had the privilege of growing as an artist while also serving his community through facilitator roles and space holding.



MERCY LAUFALE

Mercy Laufale is a Sāmoan (Sataua, Sāmoa) poet, from South Auckland. Her roots and upbringing continue to influence her voice and perspective. An avid writer since highschool, she has competed in Word The Front Line, and produced commissioned work for the Black Ferns during the 2023 World Cup campaign. She hopes to expand her writing and use it as a powerful tool for healing, self-discovery, and authentic self-expression.



MODULE 1

THEME: ORIGINS



MODULE 1

THEME: ORIGINS



Blurb: This session is about recognising who we are as people, individuals who carry a culture, and recognising the connections/links we already have to it.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I am exploring how to feel comfortable in my own skin
- I am learning how to use writing as a tool that can utilise positive self-affirmation of my identity and community building

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I have introduced myself to the group
- I have discussed parts of my identity that matter to me
- I have participated in a writing prompt
- I have shared my work

SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

NAME AND ACTION* (5 MINUTES)

Participants stand in a circle. One by one, each person says their name and performs an action that represents something they enjoy doing. The group then repeats the person's name and action together. This activity supports connection by helping participants learn each other's names, build confidence, and begin expressing themselves physically and creatively. The facilitator should lead by example, modelling enthusiasm and encouraging participants to take positive risks in a safe, supportive space.

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES* (10 MINUTES)

Participants form two circles – an inner circle facing outward and an outer circle facing inward. Each pair discusses a prompt for 60–90 seconds before rotating. Begin with simple questions and gradually deepen the kōrero.

STARTER PROMPTS INCLUDE:

- What is culture?
- How do you celebrate culture?
- Why do you think culture matters today?

Use visual stimulus such as photos of flags, siren bikes, or food to spark discussion. Light-hearted prompts such as 'Who has the best chop suey?' also help to relax participants into the space. This activity encourages a range of perspectives while reinforcing that there is no single correct definition of culture. In the appendix will be suggestions for visual prompts that can be used.

JUICY FRUIT (15 MINUTES)

This community-based version of Juicy Fruit focuses on shared experiences connected to culture, identity, and belonging. Participants change seats when statements apply to them. Statements should be framed in ways that build connection and opens up talanoa, such as 'Anyone who learned a family recipe from their elders' or 'Anyone who has represented their culture through sport, music, or dance.' This activity continues to strengthen group trust and normalises shared experience.

DISCUSSION* (20 MINUTES)

As a whole group, participants rank what connects them most strongly to their culture from the following options:

- Food
- Music
- Dance
- Sports
- Faith
- Other (added by participants)

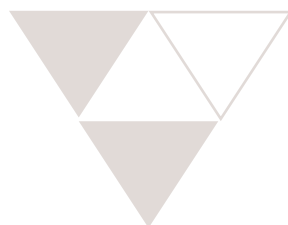
Once the top three connections are identified, participants explain why these elements help them feel connected. The group then moves into talanoa-style discussion exploring similarities, differences, and personal stories.

GUIDING DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- What was your strongest connection and why?
- Share a moment when you deeply felt connected to your culture.
- Are there ways we practice culture differently?
- Does difference mean we are 'doing culture wrong'?
- Can there be multiple valid ways of practicing culture?
- What lessons have these cultural spaces taught you?

EXAMPLES MAY INCLUDE:

- Sport teaching the meaning of service (tautua)
- Music supporting language learning
- Food being the heart of family connection



WRITING PROMPT* (20 MINUTES)

Using the connection you ranked the highest, write an ode to this part of your life, thanking it for the ways it has helped you connect with your culture. Participants may describe why they enjoy it, how it shaped their identity, and how they hope to continue that relationship into the future.

Explain that an ode is a poem of praise and often personifies the subject. Participants are encouraged to write in a gentle chronological sequence – past, present, and future – to help give their poem structure. This can be scaffolded in a similar way to an 'I Am' prompt.

Stanza 1 – Introducing the Subject (That first experience that made you connect with it/ how you came to love it)

Dear _____,
you _____,
and _____.
From the moment _____,
I have known _____.

Stanza 2 – Celebrating Qualities (Why you love it now, what you enjoy about it)

You are the one who _____,
the one who always _____,
the one who reminds me that _____.
How you _____,
how you _____,
this is why you matter.

Stanza 3 – Personal Connection (How has it helped you connect to your culture)

Because of you, I _____.
Because of you, I remember _____.
You have taught me _____.
You have shown me _____.
O _____, you shape who I am.

Stanza 4 – Closing Praise (Your closing remarks)

Stay with me in _____.
Grow with me through _____.
Let me honour you by _____.
This ode is for you,
and for all the ways you _____.

SHARING SPACE* (10 MINUTES)

Share in pairs and then in a group





MODULE 2

THEME: KAVENGA



MODULE 2

THEME: KAVENGA

SESSION 2:

Blurb: This session is about exploring who we are in relation to what we believe. In this session we will dig deeper into the stereotypes (both positive and negative) that come from being a part of our Pacific culture / community. There is also an opportunity for participants to reflect deeper and reflect on whether the expectations they face or feel are things they have to live up to, or are actively resisting against.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I am learning how my identity is shaped by culture, community, and creative expression
- I am exploring the expectations and stereotypes placed on people, and how I respond to them.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can discuss how poems and stories challenge common stereotypes and expectations
- I can identify expectations placed on Pacific people and reflect on which ones I relate to or resist.
- I have used writing to explore what belonging means to me

SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

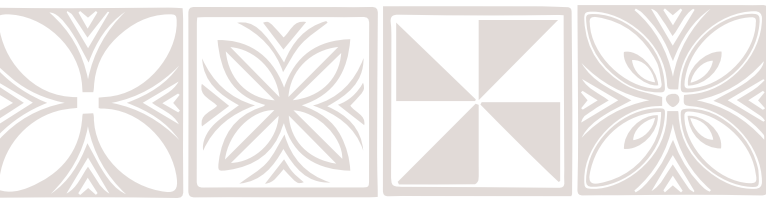
SONS OF BLACKBIRD* (15 MINUTES)

Start the workshop by showing/reading the following short film (click the title for the link to the video). If you cannot play the video, you can read the poem (in appendix at the end of this workshop outline). Get participants to share back what stood out to them, what resonated with them, and what they liked/disliked.

Sons of Blackbird - Lastman So'oula

<https://www.thecoconet.tv/moana-arts/pacific-short-films/sons-of-blackbird-some-day-stories-short-film/>

After gathering what they liked and disliked, offer them the quote "Until the lion learns to write, every story glorifies the hunter." an African proverb, and ask them to consider whether this poem is written from the perspective of the lion or hunter and why?



GUESS THE TRUTH* (10 MINUTES)

This game works best when the class is divided into two or three teams of roughly equal size. Each participant received two sheets of paper and was instructed to write one true statement about themselves without including their name on the first sheet. The truth should be something that others might not immediately know about them that they are comfortable sharing with the class. On the second sheet which will also be handed in, write which truth corresponds to which name on the paper. When everyone has finished writing, the papers are given to the facilitators.

Once all truths are collected, the facilitator will read out each team's papers and give the other team(s) time to go through the statements they have heard, discussing and deciding which person from the opposing team they believe wrote each truth. Each team records its guessed matches clearly so they can be checked later against the original copy the facilitators will be holding.

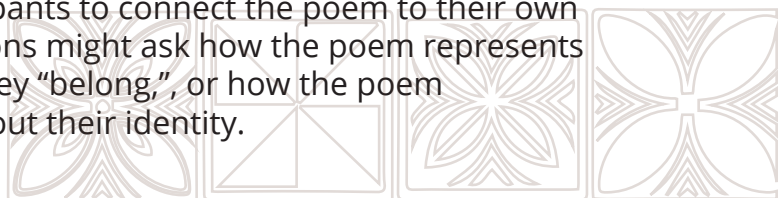
When all teams have completed their guesses, each truth is read aloud with the opposing team guessing which participant it corresponds with, before the participant who wrote it identifies themselves. Teams score one point for every correctly matched truth. After all statements have been revealed and scored, the team with the highest number of correct matches is declared the winner. This activity encourages attentive listening, teamwork, and social awareness while also offering a fun and engaging way for participants to learn more about one another.

CHECKLIST* (15 MINUTES)

Checklist by Selena Tusitala Marsh

Participants will work together to explore the Checklist poem by Selena Tusitala Marsh. Begin by providing each participant, or each group, with a copy of the poem. Allow them a few quiet minutes to read it through on their own, taking note of any lines, ideas, or stylistic features that stand out to them. Once everyone has had time to absorb the poem, invite the class to talanoa about the poem as a big group. Encourage participants to refer directly to the poem as they speak so that their ideas remain grounded in the text.

The discussion should gradually move from general impressions to more focused conversation about identity and how the poem portrays it. Participants might consider how it reflects the ways people often categorise themselves or are categorised by others. To support thoughtful engagement, you can introduce open-ended questions that prompt participants to connect the poem to their own experiences or observations. Some questions might ask how the poem represents the idea of how one understands where they "belong," or how the poem challenges assumptions they may have about their identity.



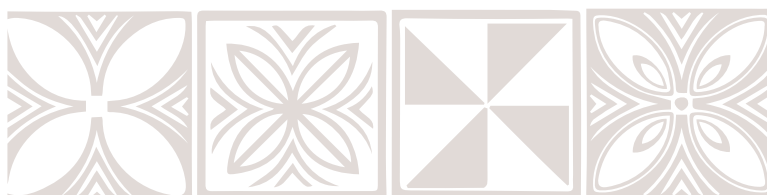
As the discussion unfolds, encourage participants to listen to one another's perspectives and build on each other's ideas. The aim is not necessarily to reach a single interpretation but to open space for reflection, comparison, and connection. By the end of the activity, participants should have engaged on a deeper level of what it means to be or not be seen as 'truly from the Pacific'.

OUTLINES (15 MINUTES)

Each participant will be given a handout with an outline of a gingerbread person on it, explaining that this is a tool for thinking about expectations—both internal and external—that people may feel pressured to meet. Participants begin by writing inside the outline, the thoughts, emotions, and inner qualities that this ideal person is expected to have. These might include beliefs they are meant to hold, attitudes they are encouraged to adopt, or feelings they are expected to hide or display. On the outside of the figure, participants write the behaviours, actions, and spoken expressions that this ideal person is expected to show in public. These external aspects should reflect how the ideal person is supposed to appear to others, including the kinds of things they might say or do to uphold the expectations placed upon them. To finish this exercise, they will be asked to look into the glossary of this section and pick which of the values from the glossary most resonates with their gingerbread person and why?

After participants have completed their task, bring the class together to discuss what they created. Invite them to reflect on the ways they see themselves in relation to their gingerbread person: which expectations feel familiar or relatable, and which ones feel distant or restrictive. Encourage them to notice the similarities and differences between their own identities and the qualities of the ideal figure they have described. This discussion can gently lead into a broader consideration of how cultural ideals shape people's sense of self and how individuals may choose to embrace, challenge, or reinterpret those expectations.

It may be helpful to remind participants that while stereotypes and cultural templates can sometimes offer a starting point for understanding group norms, as they would have seen in the Checklist Poem by Selena Tusitala Marsh, they become limiting when they prevent growth or fail to capture the complexity of real people. The aim of this activity is not to reinforce stereotypes but to unpack them and consider how they influence identity, behaviour, and personal choices. By comparing themselves with their gingerbread figures, participants gain space to explore the pressures they navigate, the aspects of their identity that feel authentic, and the ways they might define themselves beyond predefined expectations.



CHECKLIST WRITING PROMPT* (15 MINUTES)

Participants will create their own checklist poem that reflects what it means to belong to their community. Their poem should be written in the style of a checklist, using short, simple statements that together paint a picture of what membership in that community is like. Encourage them to include two kinds of statements: those that genuinely connect with their own identity and sense of belonging, and those that their community commonly shares or values even if the participant personally does not relate to them. This balance helps them recognise the diversity within any group and the nuance in how individuals experience belonging. Making sure to re-emphasise not connecting with an aspect isn't write or wrong, it is an expression of individuality, which is healthy.

Once they've done the checklist, their job is to flesh it out in longer form.

For example: Laughs like a hurricane = She has the laugh of a hurricane's rain on a tin roof. (tick)

or

Speaks a Pacific language = He can speak the language of his Island ancestors (blank)

Reminding them that they are to end their poem in a way that would be affirming to their identity of themselves/anyone who would read it.

SHARE* (10 MINUTES)

In pairs and then as a group.

REFLECTION AND CLOSING ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

To close the session, the facilitator will invite participants to take a moment of quiet reflection.

Each participant will be given a sticky note. On their sticky note, participants will write down one expectation or stereotype they have encountered that they do not want to define them. This may be something placed on them by others, something they feel pressured to live up to, or something they are actively resisting.

Participants do not need to share what they write unless they choose to. Once everyone has finished, the facilitator may invite participants to place their sticky notes somewhere in the room (for example, on a wall, whiteboard, or shared surface) as a symbolic act of naming and releasing that expectation, or simply discard it in the bin.

The facilitator should remind the group that letting go of an expectation does not mean rejecting culture or community. Rather, it is an action that affirms individuality, dignity, and the right to define one's own identity.

The session can then be closed by acknowledging the courage it takes to reflect honestly and by thanking participants for their engagement and respect for one another throughout the session.





MODULE 3

THEME: FĀNUA



MODULE 3

THEME: FĀNUA



Blurb: This session is about exploring where we belong, and how we can cultivate a sense of belonging to people, place and/or other communities, spaces and places that are important to us as Samoan and Tongan Youth. This session also invites participants to re-consider, reframe and reimagine the identity markers that they hold importance with.

(Note: If participants are yet to return to their ancestral island(s), at least talking about what they know about their island, and inviting them to imagine that as their 'cultural home that their ancestors rest in' can be a start for those a few generations removed from their islands. They may even use this opportunity to retell a story passed down to them. "My nana tells me..., what are stories from the homeland, that have been carried over the ocean to them? What are the stories that they now hold and want to pass on to their future children?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I am understanding how place shapes identity, values, and belonging.
- I am practicing seeing people, places, and experiences from multiple perspectives
- I am using writing to explore connecting to place through observation, memory and imagination.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can describe how values may shift across different places and contexts.
- I can identify places that have shaped who I am, and explain why those places matter.
- I can use writing to show different perspectives of how to view a place
- I have experimented with sensory detail, repetition, or voice in place-based writing.

SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

FĀNUA AND VALUES* (15 MINUTES)

The facilitator will introduce the following Samoan saying to the group:

E ui ina sui faiga, ae tumau pea fa'avae

Though the approaches may change, the foundations remain the same.

The facilitator should read the saying aloud, modelling to the best of their ability the positive, respectful, and encouraging language-based approach that this guide asks of its participants. After reading the saying, the facilitator will invite participants to sit quietly with it for a moment.

Participants are not expected to analyse or translate the saying beyond what is provided.

The facilitator will then lead a whole-group discussion using the following guiding questions:

- What do you think this saying is suggesting about change and continuity?
- How does this idea connect to culture, language, or values?
- In what ways might our cultural foundations stay the same even when our environments change?
- How might this saying relate to growing up in Aotearoa while carrying ancestral roots elsewhere?
- What feels familiar or true about this idea in your own life?

Participants should be encouraged to speak from personal experience, listen respectfully to others, and recognise that there are multiple valid interpretations of the saying. The facilitator should reinforce that adaptation does not mean loss, and that change can be a way of sustaining culture rather than abandoning it.

MAP OF MEANING (15 MINUTES)

Participants will be invited to create a map of meaning based on places that have contributed to who they are today.

The facilitator should explain that these places do not need to be literal maps or geographically accurate. They may include ancestral islands, neighbourhoods, schools, churches, family homes, sports fields, or any other spaces that feel significant.

Participants will blindly draw three to four places that have shaped them and write or think of one memory, value, or feeling connected to each place. Remind participants un

Participants may then share one place and its meaning with a partner or the group, depending on time and comfort levels.

WAITING* (10 MINUTES)

Before viewing, the facilitator should explain that participants are not expected to analyse the film or identify a “right” interpretation. Instead, they are invited to notice moments, images, or characters that stand out to them, and to pay attention to what feels familiar, unfamiliar, or meaningful based on their own experiences.

Participants may watch quietly without taking notes.

Watch the film waiting here: **W A I T I N G** | Short Film
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuewaFZKZzl>

FILM DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

After watching the film, participants will take part in a facilitated group discussion. The facilitator should begin by inviting participants to share observations rather than interpretations, and remind the group that there are multiple valid ways of understanding the film.

Use the following guiding questions to support discussion:

- How might someone who is not from this community understand the characters in this film?
- What might someone from this community recognise or understand that others might miss?
- If you were describing where you come from to someone unfamiliar with it, what would you want them to know?

The facilitator should encourage participants to build on each other's ideas, listen respectfully, and speak from their own perspectives. There is no requirement for all participants to contribute verbally; listening is also a valid form of participation.

YOU SEE, I SEE (15 MINUTES)

To start this activity, the facilitator should highlight that, if not already made explicit, the same people and places can be understood very differently depending on who is looking. This activity is about practising this way of seeing more deliberately by recognising how one thing can hold multiple meanings at the same time.

This activity explores how the same person, object, or place can hold different meanings depending on perspective.

Participants will choose characters, objects, or moments from the film and complete the table using the structure **"They see..., I see..."**.

- **"They see"** represents an outside perspective.
- **"I see"** represents an inside or lived perspective.

Subject (from the film or real life)	They see... (outside perspective)	I see... (inside perspective)
Packet of Raro	A sachet of powder for a drink	Something that can be traded for bread
A boy waiting at a phone booth	A kid with nothing to do	A child waiting for his father
Me on my phone	A youth wasting their time and potential	A friend connecting with others online
Giving my thoughts	A youth talking back, being disrespectful	A person wanting to be heard

Participants will begin by finding examples from within the film and putting them in the table, before moving to use examples from their own lives or communities to continue the table. Short phrases are sufficient.

There are no right or wrong answers. The aim is to practise holding more than one meaning at the same time.

Participants may share one example if they choose. Before participants begin, the facilitator should explain that the table is a tool to help organise thinking, not a test. Participants may write single words, short phrases, or full sentences.

IF THIS PLACE COULD TALK (15 MINUTES)

Participants will write about a place that is meaningful to them, using perspective to shape their writing. This may be a place they live in now, a place from memory, an ancestral or imagined place, or a place they feel connected to in some way.

To begin, participants will use the following structure:

When I am at/in (name of place),
I see...
They see...

"I" may reflect the participant's own experience of the place.

"They" may reflect how others experience, use, or misunderstand the same place.

Participants are encouraged to repeat this structure to build a vivid picture of the place. Specific detail is encouraged, as it helps create depth and clarity.

If participants begin to run out of ideas, the facilitator may invite them to pivot to writing about a different place, or shift perspective using the senses, for example:

- *I hear..., they hear...*
- *I feel..., they feel...*
- *I smell..., they smell...*
- *I taste..., they taste...*

Participants may write in English, their heritage language(s), or a mix of both. Short lines or fragments are acceptable, though participants may choose to develop longer or more detailed sentences.

SHARE (10 MINS)

In pairs and then as a group.





MODULE 4

THEME: VĀ



MODULE 4

THEME: VĀ



Blurb: Vā is a significant term that is used across and within different Polynesian communities. Samoan scholar and writer, Albert Wendt describes it as the relational space between two living things/people. While there are many ways and meanings latched onto vā, the vā that will be explored here is the one that exists between Samoan and Tongan youth and their parents / parental figures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I understand vā as the relational space that connects people through care, responsibility, and reciprocity.
- I have explored how relationships with parents or significant adults are shaped by context, history, and experience.
- I can use language and writing to show relationships through detail, action, and memory.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can describe how vā operates within a group or relationship through discussion or activity.
- I can identify actions, qualities, or memories that show how care and responsibility are expressed in a relationship.
- I can use writing to represent a parent or significant adult with specificity.
- I have experimented with language choices, including heritage language(s), to express relational meaning.

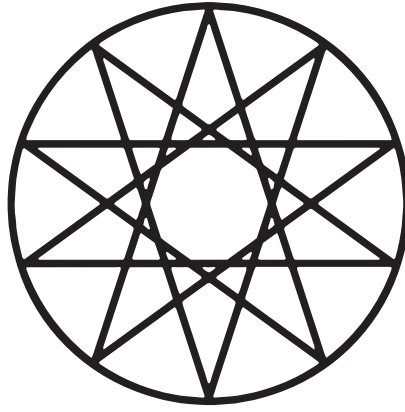
SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

IMAGINING THE VĀ – STRING CIRCLE (15 MINUTES)

Participants will stand in a circle. The facilitator will provide a ball of string (if unable to acquire a ball of yarn can be substituted) for the group.

The activity begins with one participant holding the start of the ball of string, saying their name and one value they hold (e.g. honesty, family, respect), and then passing the ball to someone else across or at least 3 people away from themselves in the circle. The person receiving the string holds onto the string with one hand (but not too tightly that it the tension would break the string), and throws it with the other hand repeating the process, passing it on. This continues until everyone has spoken and is holding part of the string.

As the string is passed, a web will form across the circle. Once the web is established and participants are holding the string firmly, the facilitator may place a small object (such as a remote or tennis ball) in the centre of the web to demonstrate how the connections between participants can hold weight.



(An example of what the shape might look like)

The facilitator should then explain that the string represents the *vā* — the relational space that connects everyone in the group. Each person contributes to the strength of that *vā* through their presence and values. If one person lets go, the structure weakens. If someone pulls too tightly, the structure breaks. It is only through a shared commitment to maintain the structure, that it maintains its form, and it is only when all pull it with enough tension that it is firm but does not break that it can hold weight effectively.

The facilitator may emphasise that this the *vā* this group has formed is unique, the sequence of people, names, and values that formed it could not be replicated by any other group attempting this.

If appropriate and if the group feels safe, the facilitator may invite a second round where participants share something they hold to be true. This is optional and should only be done if emotional safety can be maintained. This activity is not intended for trauma sharing.

After the activity, the facilitator should guide participants to gently release the string and take a moment to reset before moving on.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE VOCABULARY MEMORY GAME (15 MINUTES)

The facilitator will bring participants back together so that they are seated at desks or tables.

To begin, the facilitator will briefly explain that this activity is about noticing and becoming familiar with heritage language vocabulary, rather than memorising perfectly or being tested. Participants should be encouraged to try, take risks, and let go of what they do not remember.

The facilitator will display a slide containing a selection of Samoan, Tongan, and English words for one minute, then remove it. Participants will then have one and a half minutes to write down as many words as they can remember. Spelling matters, but accuracy is less important than engagement.

Participants will then briefly turn to a partner to compare what they remembered, help fill in gaps, and notice which words felt familiar or unfamiliar.

The facilitator may then display the same slide again for one minute, followed by another one and a half minutes for participants to add to or revise their lists. This second viewing is intended to reinforce familiarity.

After the recall rounds, the facilitator will invite a short whole-group reflection. This may include noticing which words stood out, which ones were recognised from home or community, and which ones felt new.

At this point, the facilitator may briefly acknowledge that translation is always an approximation. Some concepts do not carry exactly the same meaning across languages. For example, words often translated as respect — such as fa’aaloalo and faka’apa’apa — hold related but distinct meanings shaped by cultural context. This reinforces that language is relational and culturally located.

Participants are encouraged to keep these nearby and draw on them naturally in their writing later in the session. There is no expectation to use all the words — even one or two is enough.

Black words = 1 point
 Blue words = 2 points
 Brown words = 3 points
 Green words = 4 points

	Talofa lava								
									Mother
		Malo le soifua			Ngaue Tokoni			Palōveepi	
					Tinā				
Hello		Faka’apa’apa						Loto fakatōkilalo	
	Tautua			Respect					Fa’ē
			Humility		Father				
Proverb								’Ofa	
		Tamā			Love			Tamai	
	Fa’aaloalo		Service						Formal Hello
		Alofa							
Muagagana/Alagāupu					Malo e lelei				
		Solo		Poetry				Malo etau lava	
		Lotomaulalo							

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Hello	Talofa lava	Malo e lelei
Hello (but more formal)	Malo le soifua	Malo etau lava
Mother	Tinā	Fa’ē
Father	Tamā	Tamai
Love	Alofa	’Ofa
Respect	Fa’aaloalo	Faka’apa’apa
Humility	Lotomaulalo	Loto fakatōkilalo
Service	Tautua	Ngaue Tokoni
Proverb	Muagagana / Alagāupu	Palōveepi
Poetry	Solo	Maau

A GENEALOGY OF LOVE* (15 MINS)

Watch: A Genealogy of Love by Eric Soakai
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6_wxRBOFsw

After reading or watching the poem, the facilitator will invite participants to discuss it in pairs or small groups, before returning to the whole group.

The purpose of this discussion is to notice how relationships, context, and language are carried through writing.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (5 MINUTES)

In pairs or groups of three, participants are invited to discuss the following prompts:

- How would you describe the relationship between the speaker and their mother? What details help you understand the vā between them?
- What experiences, responsibilities, or histories have shaped who the mother is?
- How does the use of Samoan language, song, or repetition affect the feeling or meaning of the poem?

Groups do not need to answer every question. Listening is also a valid form of participation.

WHOLE-GROUP SHARING (5 MINUTES)

The facilitator will then bring the group back together and invite:

- one idea, line, or observation that stood out, or
- something that helped them better understand the relationship in the poem.

The facilitator should remind participants that there are many valid ways to connect to the poem, and that relationships with parents or caregivers can be loving, complicated, distant, or still forming.

SHOW BEFORE YOU TELL* (15 MINUTES)

The facilitator will explain that before writing about a parent or significant adult, it can be helpful to gather language that reflects how that person is experienced, rather than trying to describe the relationship all at once. Writers are often encouraged to show why someone matters through detail and action, rather than simply telling the audience that they are important.

Using the poem as a reference, the facilitator may briefly point out that the writer does not describe their mother in abstract terms, but instead shows who she is through actions, qualities, histories, and small, specific details.

Participants will then choose a parent, caregiver, or significant adult to focus on. This does not need to be a biological parent; participants may choose anyone who has played a parental role in their life.

Participants will begin building a word bank by writing:

- Three to five qualities they would use to describe this person
- Three to five actions that show how this person expresses care
- Three to five memories that stand out about this person

Participants should be encouraged to notice connections between these lists. A quality may be shown through an action, and that action may be tied to a specific memory. Where possible, participants can begin to flesh out details within or across their lists.

This word bank will be used to support the writing activity that follows.

GUIDE TO FREE WRITE* (20 MINUTES)

Using the word bank and notes developed in the previous activity, participants will begin their writing with one or more of the following opening lines:

- *I stare across at you and I know...*
- *I learned who I was because you...*
- *You never said you cared, but you...*

Participants will write a guided free write that describes the parent or significant adult they are staring across at. Writing may be in English, their heritage language(s), or a mix of both.

The focus should be on showing the relationship through detail, action, memory, and voice, rather than explaining it directly. Short lines, fragments, and repetition are welcome.

There is no requirement for the relationship to be simple, positive, or resolved — complexity is allowed.

SHARE* (10 MINUTES)

Internal sharing in trusted circles. Feedback from facilitator/s and peers should centre around impact, clarity, and feeling. Be sure to really highlight and positively enforce any attempt at using their heritage language and/or indigenous knowledge.



MODULE 5

THEME: VAKA



MODULE 5: VAKA

THEME: VAKA



Blurb: Vaka extends participants into deeper waters. Having established trust, identity, and relational safety, this module invites participants to navigate language more deliberately and collectively. The vaka becomes a metaphor for shared responsibility: language is no longer something to avoid, but something to steer together.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I am learning to use writing and spoken word as tools for affirmation and community building.
- I am practising using my heritage language with greater confidence in both writing and voice.
- I am learning how collective support strengthens language confidence.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I have used heritage language intentionally in my writing.
- I have practised speaking my heritage language(s) aloud in a supported group.
- I have contributed to a collective piece or shared rhythm.

SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

ARRIVAL & GROUNDING* (10 MINUTES)

Circle check-in: "What part of the journey feels steady? What feels wobbly?" Spoken, written, or gestural responses are all valid.

COLLECTIVE NAVIGATION* (10 MINUTES)

Call-and-response using familiar words from earlier modules, with emphasis on breath, rhythm, and togetherness rather than accuracy. The aim here is to warm up the voice it does not matter if the call & response makes sense - but it is about warming the voice and getting participants to practise the Polynesian vowel sounds which is essential when speaking the languages of the Moana.

LANGUAGE HARVEST* (20 MINUTES)

Participants revisit unused or avoided words from earlier word banks and glossaries, in groups. Once they have gathered 5-10 words as a group, each group will have 5 minutes to create two to three similes using at least one gathered word per simile. Once the time is up, each group will share back their best simile. After each has been heard, as a collective the class will decide which group had the best one, if this is not feasible teacher will decide.

Repeat once more, getting the groups to write metaphors instead of similes.

VAKA POEM* (25 MINUTES)

Participants draft a piece using the vaka as metaphor (journey, waves, crew, steering). Heritage language is encouraged but not mandated. Facilitator to use their prior knowledge of each of their participants and gesture them towards where there is challenge, and invite them to go deeper as / when they are ready. More fluent and confident writers and speakers may begin to want to express themselves in whole phrases or stanzas using their heritage language — while others may just want to use one or two words. The focus is not about comparing yourself to others, but rather getting each participant to self-assess where they believe they are and meet where the 'challenge' is on their vaka, and on their voyage.

- What waters / islands / challenges have you travelled through and had to overcome?
- Where are you now?
 - Is this physical, emotional, mental environment where you want to be?
- Where are you heading?
 - What does the island / destination / journey look like ahead?
- How might you use your heritage language/s in your writing to strengthen the ideas and cohesiveness communicated to your audience?
- Are you resisting something? Are you moving towards something? Are you avoiding something? Or, are you staying still because you are chilling?
- Further support: if participants find this initial prompt unclear you may provide them with a past, present, future framework to frame their metaphorical vaka voyage around.

Facilitator prompts:

Past:

Where have you been, where are the places you come from, what memories do you have, what do you see when you look back, who is there, what were some of your favourite things, what were some of the challenges you faced, what are you leaving behind, what are some of the feelings you have, what are the things that have led you to where you are today?

Present:

Where are you now, what is it like, what are you surrounded by, what do you carry with you, who are you journeying with, who do you represent, what are the things that are keeping you strong, what challenges are you facing, what are the things that fill your life, what is guiding you, what is motivating you to keep going?

Future:

Where are you going, what is ahead for you, what does the future look like, what are your hopes and dreams, what do you imagine is lying in wait for you, who do you want to be beside you, what kind of person are you, what does success look like for you, what is your life made up of, what are you taking with you into the future?

Using these provocations can help participants flesh out the world that they are navigating and also give them an opportunity to incorporate some of the words or phrases of their heritage language/s that they have spoken about in previous sessions and/or that naturally come up out of their environment at home, around their family, church or friends.

TREES–GROUP SHARING (15 MINUTES)

Participants will form a circle standing up; they will then be asked to all start sharing their poems at the same time, so that no one student is the focus of the class and all are practicing saying their words out loud. If participants run out of poem to say, encourage them to run their poem from the top to the bottom, if what they have written is too deeply personal, invite them just to repeat one or two lines from the poem for this exercise.

Sharing the poems at least once in the following ways:

Neutral: First saying the poem however they'd normally say a poem

Emotion: Reading the poem this time trying to communicate an emotion through how they say the poem. As they say the poem get them to change the emotion that is being communicated, to play with delivery and help participants recognise variance of tone and texture.

Power Stance: Remind the students Spoken Word poetry is an embodied form, our posture when we perform also communicates something just as our words do. Get participants then, to assume stances that encourage confidence, a power stance that communicates confidence. Get them to repeat their poem or lines again in this power stance.

Volume check: Maintaining their power stances encourage the poets to run through their lines now twice more, once loud and once quietly.

Solo sharing: To close sharing space, all participants will face inward and share one line of poem in their power stance with an emotion underpinning how they say it.

CLOSING* (10 MINUTES)

Group reflection: "What helped you stay in the vaka today?"

If there is extra time: Participants are invited, but not required, to prepare for outward sharing in Module 6. (Rehearsal time)



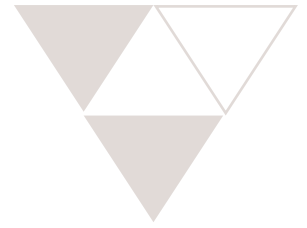
MODULE 6

THEME: ALOFA



MODULE 6: ALOFA

THEME: ALOFA



Blurb: Alofa is a return and a release. Participants reflect on who they were at the beginning of the journey and honour who they are now. Language is offered from a place of love — for self, ancestors, and community. This final module centres choice, dignity, and celebration.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I am able to reflect on my growth using writing and spoken word.
- I can express myself using a blend of English and heritage language.
- I recognise language as part of my identity, not a measure of worth.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I have completed a final spoken-word piece.
- I have chosen how I want to share my work.
- I can name how my relationship with language has shifted.

SESSION STRUCTURE & TIMING (90 MINUTES)

ARRIVAL & REFLECTION MAPPING (15 MINUTES)

Participants map their journey from Module 1 to the present, naming shifts in confidence, language use, and identity, as they have navigated their journey.

KEEP THE WORDS UP* (15 MINUTES)

Split the class into smaller groups of about 5 per team, provide them with a paper and pen. In these groups they will write down key words and phrases from across the programme they have gathered, potentially words or phrases they are drawn to or have struggled with the pronunciation of. Teams will be given 5 minutes to practice saying them as a collective. Encourage participants to have as many words and phrases as they can put onto their A4 piece of paper in large writing.

After their practice time they will be informed that you will point at a team and count down from 3, at the end of the countdown everyone on their team must say the same word or phrase on their page at the same time. Then point to the next team and repeat the countdown, so and so on. If a team fails to say the same word or phrase at the same time, they are out. Keep going until 1 team is left in. It is okay if multiple teams have the same words or phrases, they must simply not repeat themselves. The last team standing wins.

If repeating game, encourage them to rewrite words on new pages, switching up teams so different words can be explored too

POLISHING OLD PIECES* (20 MINUTES)

This is time for participants to revisit any pieces they wish to continue writing into, using their new knowledge to help them edit and revise what has been written. Encourage students to use the word banks and other knowledge they might have collected throughout the duration of the modules to inform the pieces.

Should participants not wish to revisit their old pieces they can write a final piece addressed to themselves, their ancestors, or their community, weaving heritage language naturally.

SAY IT WITH MANA – ADVANCED* (20 MINUTES)

Participants will be get into pairs or small groups and focus on integrating expression, tone, volume and body in how they say their poems for these exercises:

Tea Time: Participants will practice saying their selected piece of poetry as if they were in a 1800s tea party. Intended to help students practice saying their pieces quietly and conversationally, minor movement, focusing on precise articulation of words.

Charismatic Preacher: Participants will practice saying their selected piece of poetry as if they were a high energy charismatic preacher. Intended to help students saying their piece with greater volume and practice projecting their voice, big movements, focusing on over exaggerating performance.

Sad Clown: Participants will practice saying their selected piece of poetry as if they were a deflated clown, who is still trying to be funny. Intended to help students practice interaction with the audience, starting sad and deflated, if they are able to cheer up or get laughs from the audience they should lean into this and become a more jovial clown with bigger movements. Intended to help participants engage more with audience on top of practice above mentioned things.

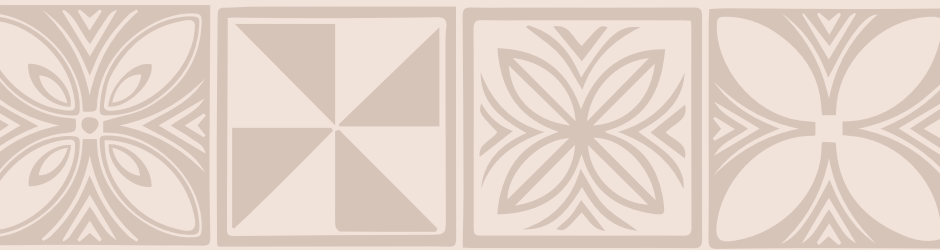
FINAL SHARING* (15 MINUTES)

Choice-based sharing:

An option for each student to share back their piece to the whole class or an invited audience or record their work to gift back to their communities or people that have supported them thus far on their cultural journey.

CLOSING RITUAL* (15 MINUTES)

Affirmation circle acknowledging each participant. The programme closes with a shared phrase, prayer, or collective repetition of an agreed upon word.



FINAL NOTE TO FACILITATORS

***YOU ARE NOT HERE TO FIX LANGUAGE, MEASURE FLUENCY,
OR CORRECT ACCENTS.***

***YOU ARE HERE TO CREATE SAFETY, INVITE VOICE, AND
WITNESS LANGUAGE RETURNING.***

***WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE TO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE —
EVEN SOFTLY, EVEN PARTIALLY — REVITALISATION IS
ALREADY HAPPENING.***



APPENDIX A: POEMS & VISUAL SUPPORT

SESSION ONE:

Visual prompts for discussion:



SESSION TWO:

SHORT FILM POEM: BLACKBIRD

Sala'ivao Lastman So'oula

They say,
The truth is this, and the truth is that,
The truth is a lie see, the actual fact is,

My people were never invited to this place,
We were, hired to replace,
Loose screws on machines that weren't up to scratch,
The hired help, a simple solution with invisible strings attached,
But we came anyway, with hopes in our hearts and the sun on our backs,
They opened up the gates and we came flooding in on planes and ships,
They never understood our mother tongue and so we sealed our lips,
And silent we are still,

We put on the boots with the steel tips and we walk, and we walk and we work,
So the next generation can live for something better,
Wrapping our dreams in fluorescent vests only to be more invisible than ever,
Gotta make it gotta make the next shift,
Traded our way of life, just for a quick, buck,
Pay cheque to pay cheque that's how we live it up,
Wake up just to regret waking up,

But I gotta clock in let the day begin,
Put the bag on the conveyor guide its mouth through the sealer,
Didn't get paid for extra hours last week,

Put yourself on the conveyor guide your mouth through the sealer,
The temp worker doesn't get a say I guess,
Now I'm on the conveyor with my mouth through the sealer,
To be another product for slave traders and dealers,
I've seen this routine too many times before,
But it's swept under the pallets of the factory floors,
We stack and we store,
We stack and we store,
Hopefully we don't get stacked and stored,
But when the boss asks, Overtime?
We reply, sure.

We fill our lungs with tobacco smoke, and breathe out pointless conversations,
Like, how was the weekend? Well I got pretty wasted,
You know the types of questions on regular rotation,
About females, about work, about sports, about females,
There's always that one guy that who spins the best fairy tales,
He might talk alotta shit but, that's the entertainment for the day,
Coz there's not much change around here,

Work is the same,
The same levers pulled, the same notches turning,
The same buttons pushed, the same faces yawning,

The old timer tries to school us during the breaks,
He sat there with a filter between his lips,
And with cigarette stained fingertips, pointed out the worst about people with
power,
"It's bad enough you get paid shit, but they treat you like shit too",
He says that's how capitalism works,
But we have families to feed so our choices are limited,
Tone down your talk of equality,
You might get called a communist or a hippy, as if that were a bad thing,

I could see the regret, welling up the corners of his eyes,
His longing for the pacific trapped in his gaze,
Almost becoming a reflection of mine,
Were we meant to share the same ache in our spine?
The same, blistered skin on our knuckles,
I guess its just part of the production line,
Production line,
Production, lie.



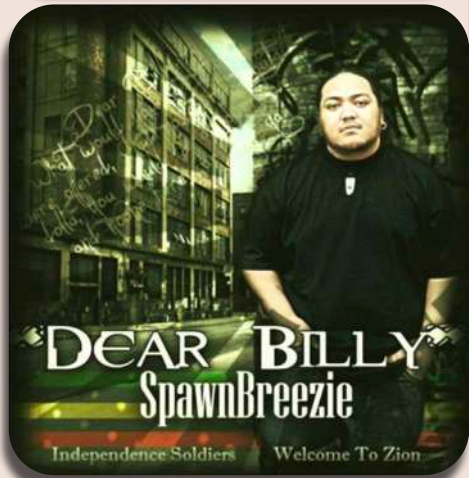
POEM: CHECKLIST

Selina Tusitala Marsh

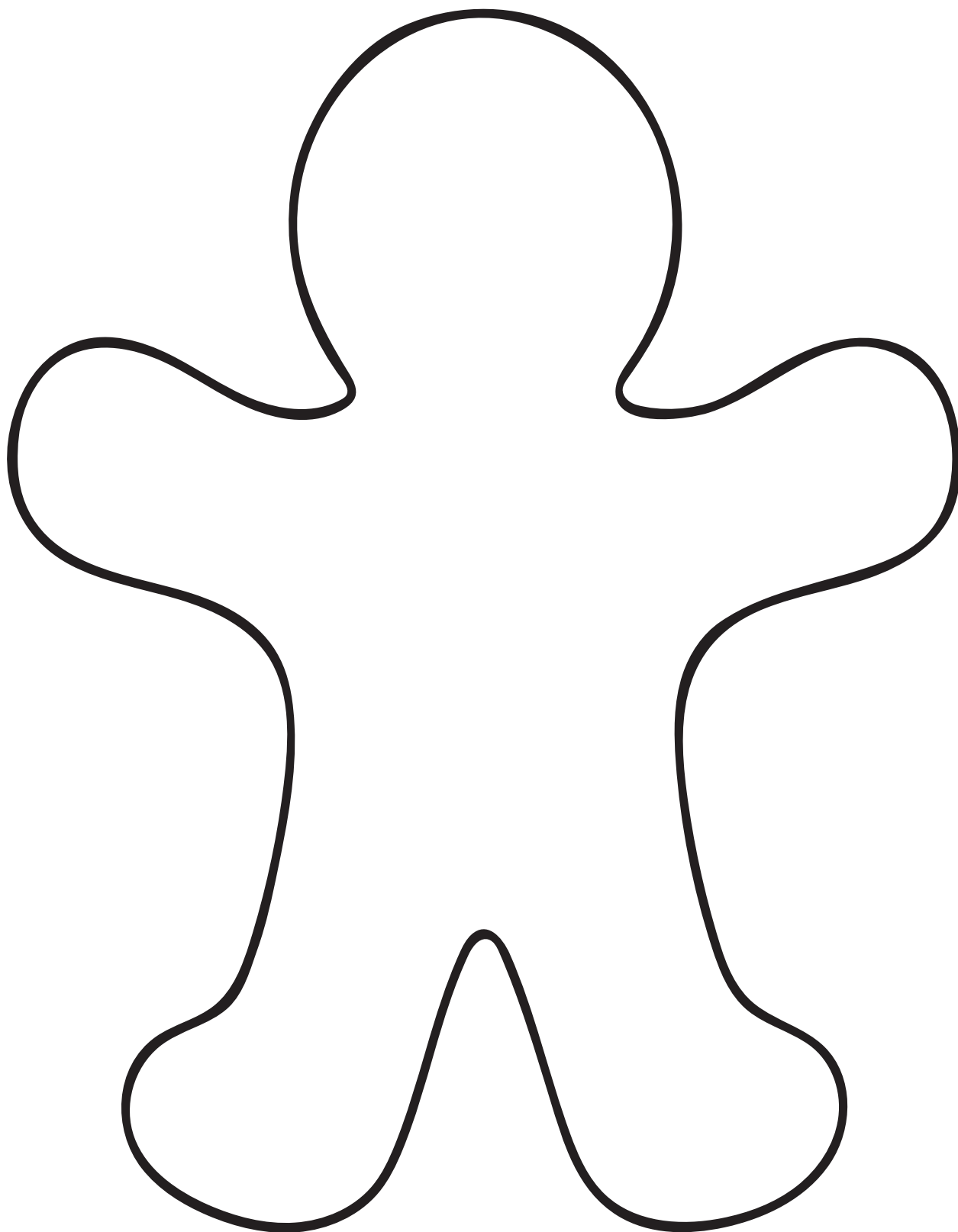
CHECKLIST

Brown eyes	✓
Unruly hair	✓
Big boned	✓
Speaks a Pacific language	
Can perform a Pacific dance at will	
Pacific Island mother	✓
Pacific Island father	
Born in a Pacific Island (not including New Zealand)	
Raised in a Pacific Island (not including Waiheke)	
Emigrated from a Pacific Island in formative early years	
Attends a Pacific Island church or has church-based affiliations (autalavou, aufaipese etc.)	
Owens several seasonal Pacific garments (puletasi etc.)	✓
Three or more weekly occurrences of tying back one's hair into a tightly oiled bun (fa'apaku etc.)	✓
Owens an uku comb (manual lice detector)	
Owens and/or commonly wears Pasifika/Pacifika/Pacifica jewellery, defined as comprising, in whole or part thereof, raw materials manufactured within, or popularly purported to be originating from, the Pacific. These include shell, bone, coconut husk and/or fibre, and tapa cloth	✓
Laughs like hurricane rain on a tin roof	✓
Has an unusually strong parental bond, born out of alofa and a sense of duty, oftentimes manipulative in nature	✓
Lives with extended family (equal to or greater than 9 members)	✓
Nurtures kinship ties in non-traditional settings	✓
Weathers the judgement of other Pacific Islanders regarding the authenticity of one's cultural identity	✓
No longer cares about the above	✓

Please ensure all questions have been answered to the best of your validity.
Thank you.



POETRY ACTIVITY:

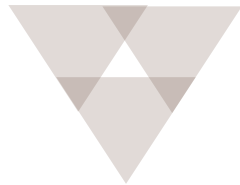


SESSION FOUR:

POEM: GENEALOGY OF LOVE

Eric Soakai

Massaging my mother's hands,
Tracing fingers over her fading scars,
as she tells me the story of the price
she paid to get here.
My mother, oldest of 13
Granddaughter of Tuatagaloa Luafutu
Theodore Wulf
She knew well what sacrifices meant,
but
she still left.
Left everything she'd ever known
behind,
left everything but her heart
when she hopscotched across the
islands
to arrive in Niu Sila.
When she arrived in the land smelling
of 'Milk & Honey'
she was greeted by racism, sexism
and debt
but she did not frown, she smiled
a smile that knows God's love.
Thanked God that her children were
all under the same roof.
Sang praise's that we were healthy,
safe.
We sang praises together
Fa'afetai i le atua
lena tatou tupu ai
ina ua na alofa fua
ia te tatou uma nei
la pe pese,
Say ia pe pese,
Aleluia fa'afetai
Whenever we'd do loku,
mom would say
"O le ala i le pule o le tautua.
Remember that the path to leader-
ship is through service"



Believe me,
when I say serve my mother has,
serve my mother does,
serve my mother will to her last
breath.
Just, as the person who admired her
the most did.
Her grandfather,
clad in callouses and wisdom
held our village and our district on his
back
with a smile that knows God's love.
So my mother,
why would she be afraid?
why should she be scared?
when she is of the lineage of the
taupou,
crown jewel of Poutasi, Falealili
When my mother smiles,
God and our ancestors dance in that
smile.
la pepese,
say ia pepese,
Aleluia fa'afetai.
I continue trying to massage out the
aches,
in my mothers hands and my
mothers back
but my hands will never quite reach
the pain that hurts the most
My mother, she holds scars that run
deeper than skin.
Yet through it all, she still smiles.
So I learn to smile too,
In the presence of the person I
admire the most.
Tina, how blessed am I to call you
home,
I reckon I'm pretty blessed.
Aye?

APPENDIX B: WORD BANKS

INTRODUCTORY WORD BANK (EXEMPLAR)

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Hello	Talofa lava	Malo e lelei
Hello (but more formal)	Malo le soifua	Malo e tau lava
Mother	Tinā	Fa'ē
Father	Tamā	Tamai
Love	Alofa	'Ofa
Respect	Fa'aaloalo	Faka'apa'apa
Humility	Lotomauualalo	Loto fakatōkilalo
Service	Tautua	Ngaue Tokoni
Proverb	Muagagana / alagāupu	Palōveepi
Poetry	Solo	Maau

SESSION ONE: WORD BANK

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Who am I?	O ai a'u?	Ko hai au?
Name	Igoa	Higoa
Celebration	Fa'afiafiaga	Fakafiefia
Connection	So'otaga	Fehokotaki
Sports	Ta'aloga	Sipoti
Food	Mea'ai	Me'akai
Community	Nu'u	Kominuniti
Discussion	Talanoaga	Talanoa
Proverb	Muagagana / alagāupu	Palōveepi
Poetry	Solo	Maau
Music	Musika/Pese	Hiva
Faith	Fa'atuatua	Tui
Value	Tāua / Tāua Fa'aagafesootai	Mahu'inga

SESSION TWO: WORD BANK

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Service	Tautua	Tauhi
Responsibility	Tiute	Vaha'angatae
Stereotype	Manatu Failoga (fixed belief)	Fakanatula Ongo tatau
Resonate	Fetaui lelei	Mo'oni
Truth	Upu moni	Tohi
Word	Upu	Lisi
List	Lisi	Ngaahi'amanaki
Expectation	Fa'amoemoe	Fai tatau
Similarities	Mea tutusa	Faikehekehe
Differences	Ese'esega	Fakahā
Expression	Fa'aalia / Fa'aaliga	Makatu'unga
Foundation	Fa'avae	Fekau'aki
Relate	Fa'atatau	

SESSION THREE: WORD BANK

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Land	Ele'ele / Fanua	Kelekele / Fonua
Belong	Auai	Kau
Where	O fea	Ko fea
Home	Fale/Aiga	Fale/'Api
Ancestor	Tupuaga	Tupu'anga
Language	Gagana	Lea
Old women	Lo'omatua	Finemotu'a
Old man	Toeā'ina	Tangata'eiki
Waiting	Fa'atali	Talitali
Money	Tupe	Pa'anga
Mother	Tinā	Fa'ē
Father	Tamā	Tamai
Kid	Tamaitiiti	Tamaiki
Boy	Tama	Tamas'i
Girl	Teine	Tahine
Wanting to know	Fia iloa	Fie 'ilo
Me	O a'u	O au
You	O oe	Koe
We (exclusive)	Matou	Kimatulou
We (inclusive)	Tatou	Kitautolu
Them	Latou	Kinautulou

SESSION FOUR: WORD BANK

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Foundation	Fa'avae	Makatu'unga
Space	Vā	'Ata'atā/Vaha'a
Parents	Mātua	Mātu'a tauhi fānau
Action	Fa'atino	Ke ngaue
Sacred	Tapu	Tapu
Unrestricted (free of tapu)	Noa	Noa
Opportunity	Avanoa	Faingamalie
Importance	Tāua	Mahu'inga
Mother	Tinā	Fa'ē
Father	Tamā	Tamai
Kid	Tamaitiiti	Tamaiki
Boy	Tama	Tamasi'i
Girl	Teine	Tahine
Connection	Feso'ota'i	Fehokotaki
Lead	Pule	Fakatau

SESSION FIVE: WORD BANK

English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Boat	Va'a	Vaka
Path	Ala	Hala
Arrive	Taunu'u	A'u
Voyage	Fōlauga	Folau
Challenge	Lu'itau	Pole
Morning	Taeao	Pongipongi
Island	Motu	Motu
Journey	Malaga	Fonoga
Past	Tuana'i/Taimi ua mavae	Kuohili
Present	Taimi nei	Lolotonga
Future	Lumana'i	Kaha'u
The road	Auala	Hala
Yesterday	Ananafi	'Aneafi
Moon	Masina	Mahina
Treasure	Measina	Koloa

SESSION SIX: WORD BANK



English	Sāmoan	Tongan
Faith	Fa'atuatua	Tui
Patience	Onosa'i	Kātaki
Celebration	Fa'afiafiaga	Fakafiefia
Loyalty	Fa'amaoni	Mateaki
Forgiveness	Fa'amagalo	Fakamolemole
Relationship	Mafutaga	Kaunga
Warm	Māfana	Māfana
Sound	Leo	Ongo
Remember	Manatua	Manatu
Hope	Fa'amoemoe	'Amanaki
Breath	Mānava	Manava
Together	Fa'atasi	Fakataha



REFERENCES

- Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2013). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Routledge.
- Hau'ofa, E. (2017). *Our sea of islands*. In *Peoples of the Pacific* (pp. 429-442). Routledge.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2021). *How languages are learned 5th Edition*. Oxford university press.
- Thaman, K. H. (2006). *Acknowledging indigenous knowledge systems in higher education in the Pacific Island Region*. In *Higher education, research, and knowledge in the Asia Pacific region* (pp. 175-184). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Teaiwa, T. K. (2005). The classroom as a metaphorical canoe: *Cooperative learning in Pacific Studies*. *WINHEC: International Journal of Indigenous Education Scholarship*, (1), 38-48.
- Te Hononga Akoranga COMET. (2025). *Samoa and Tongan Snapshot 2025: Tāmaki Makaurau — Education, learning and skills — A snapshot of progress towards parity (Samoa and Tongan edition)*. COMET Auckland. <https://cometauckland.org.nz/assets/files/Data/Snapshots/Samoan and Tongan-Snapshot-2025.pdf>



ASSESSMENT AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

(FOR CLASSROOM USE)

NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM — ENGLISH (YEARS 9–10)

This programme supports learning across Oral, Written, and Visual Language strands.

Participants are supported to:

Create and perform spoken texts for different audiences and purposes
Experiment with language choices, structure, and voice
Reflect on how language shapes identity and belonging

NCEA ALIGNMENT (ADAPTABLE)

NCEA Level 1 English

Develop and structure creative written texts
Create and deliver spoken presentations
Show understanding of how language features create meaning

Evidence Teachers May Collect:

Drafts and revisions of writing
Performance recordings or live presentations
Reflective writing on identity and language
Peer and self-assessment notes

Assessment Principles

Assess impact rather than fluency
Value multilingual and hybrid language use
Prioritise audience, purpose, and reflection

This programme may be delivered as a full six-session unit or adapted for individual modules or activities within formal classroom settings.

LINKS TO THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM (NZC / TE MATAIHAO)

English — Oral, Written and Visual Language

Students:

- Use language confidently for different purposes and audiences
- Create and perform spoken texts
- Experiment with voice, structure, and language features
- Reflect on how language shapes identity

Literacy Progressions

- Speaking and listening as foundational literacy
- Building meaning through discussion and performance
- Using language in culturally meaningful ways

KEY COMPETENCIES

NZC Competency	How this programme supports it
Managing self	Taking risks, preparing performances
Relating to others	Call-and-response, peer support
Participating & contributing	Collective language use
Thinking	Reflecting on identity, audience, meaning
Using language, symbols & texts	Multilingual, multimodal expression

Te Tiriti & Samoan and Tongan Education Alignment

- Values indigenous and minoritised languages
- Strengthens cultural identity
- Centres relational, collective learning



