Reimagining communities of practice: Using relational frameworks to disrupt assumptions and inequity

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As theorised by Etienne Wenger, communities of practice are becoming settled as a framework for community engagement within Aotearoa New Zealand schools. In this article, the authors critically analyse the assumptions and inequities that can arise when communities of practice prioritise school values and staff comfort over the priorities of community participants and the knowledge they bring. The authors reference their experiences in communities of practice, using vignettes to explore tensions. The article argues that when schools draw authentically on Indigenous principles, including teu le vā, and use these to establish communities of practice, hospitable, equitable and productive relationships can be realised.

Keywords: communities of practice; home-school relationships; Indigenous frameworks

INTRODUCTION

In this article, we seek to disrupt understandings of communities of practice, that are becoming settled in Aotearoa New Zealand schools to reveal assumptions and inequities in how they operate. Communities of practice are prevalent in schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, as the government organises and funds professional development using a "Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako" (Ministry of Education, 2021) model. As communities of practice become routine, they are at risk of operating mechanistically. We look to how schools might engage authentically with indigenous frameworks to productively reimagine communities of practice. We have used fictionalised vignettes (Bell, 1985, 1987, Gillborn, 2008) to draw together threads of experience and understandings from literature and weave them into a text that points to the

> Another busy day at Hapori College and Kim Wetzell, head of the school's large languages department, was running late for her lunchtime meeting. "Alisi, please make sure these tables get wiped down when you guys have finished eating." Kim grabbed her cup of tea and ran across to the staff workroom. When she arrived the Principal and senior managers sat in a neat row facing the other department heads who had grabbed chairs and gathered around the spare tables.
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> "So, let's do our best to make this an inclusive evening for our parents, shall we?" the Principal was saying. "We really do want them to understand our new report system. Jeanette's been getting her head around this and is going to speak to us on plans for the evening. Go ahead, Jeanette, let us know what you have in mind…"
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> Jeanette Hedges, the Deputy Principal, nodded and turned to her PowerPoint.

ideas with which we want to engage. This vignette imagines how teachers and senior managers might come together in an Aotearoa New Zealand high school to plan for engaging with families. Indigenous Māori and Pacific students are minoritised and often marginalised within the Aotearoa New Zealand schooling context. Historically within Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori and Pacific, students have been underserved by the education system (Alton-Lee, 2008). Currently, in Aotearoa New Zealand, the term 'Pacific' and 'Pacific peoples' is used in several government ministries, such as the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP). The Ministry of Education (MOE) shifted from Pasifika to Pacific in 2018 (Samu, 2020). Throughout this article, we refer to people of Pacific heritage in Aotearoa New Zealand as Pacific. Despite strategies in recent years to raise achievements, such as *Ka Hikitia* for Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2013) and the Pacific Education Plan (Ministry of Education, 2012), outcomes for Māori and Pacific students in the state-funded, English-medium context, often referred to as the 'mainstream' remain inequitable (Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce, 2019).

One way to address these learners' needs is by promoting home-school partnerships. Research literature whole-heartedly acknowledges that learners benefit when families and schools work together in partnerships that support collaboration, reciprocity and two-way dialogue (Bull et al., 2008; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Mutch & Collins, 2012). When collaboration between home and school works effectively to support the learner, there are opportunities to exchange knowledge and share decision-making (Bull, et al., 2008; Epstein, 1995). Parents are considered equal partners where the influence and support provided at home are as important as that delivered at school (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). However, equitable partnerships are challenging when western ideologies dominate education systems, countering minoritised groups' cultural values and knowledge (Fox, 2016). Tensions between teachers and families have been documented in the international literature (e.g., Gorski, 2016), highlighting barriers for families when their cultural and social capital are not legitimised within the school (Lareau, 2015). In a New Zealand context, Fa'avae (2017) observes how teachers continue to view minoritised learners in a deficit light despite professional development to counter this issue.

As this vignette illustrates, schools across the country must plan how to develop effective communication strategies with families. The application of a communities of practice lens can help explore power dynamics in home-school relationships (Flavell, 2021). This is an increasingly popular approach both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. One important focus of these communities of practice could be how to engage parents with the reporting process, considering how best to stimulate active participation and collaborative dialogue (Tongati'o et al., 2016a,b). This article uses vignettes to explore the power dynamics of home-school partnerships. Vignette texts provide space for the imagined characters and, therefore, us, the authors, to assert opinions, test and revise theories, raise misgivings and draw conclusions. Vignettes offer the writer and reader a forum to disrupt understandings, explore tentative suggestions, and imagine alternative possibilities by forging a creative space within the text. We draw on our experiences of doctoral research with teachers of Māori learners (Fish, 2020) and Pacific learners and families (Flavell, 2019, Cunningham, 2019), and work from our position as Pākehā educators, with a responsibility to our relationship with the Māori and Pacific communities we work alongside.

With a communities of practice framework in mind, we consider how educators might need to embrace discomfort when they re-evaluate their positioning to strengthen connections with families. We provide an overview of key ideas within communities of practice as outlined by a major proponent, Etienne Wenger (Wenger, 1998). Drawing on these ideas, we argue that a shift in positioning may be necessary for many schools so that their endeavours to engage with

families and communities are fruitful and do not exacerbate any feelings of exclusion amongst families. This article brings practical insights and offers suggestions for how inequities could be avoided by authentically drawing from Indigenous frameworks of relationality. While this article is focused on work in Aotearoa New Zealand, it offers relevant learning for education systems with similar social and historical contexts, where Indigenous students are currently minoritised.

KEY IDEAS IN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Etienne Wenger (1998) studied workplaces to learn how individuals informally group for a common purpose, sharing social practices to promote mutual understanding. The use of a communities of practice framework to explore various educational contexts, such as professional development for teachers (Bickmore et al., 2021; Hunter, 2010), student teachers on school placements (Johnston, 2016), learning experiences in the classroom (Voskoglou, 2019), and educator and community partnerships (Hart et al., 2013), demonstrates its usefulness in the educational context.

The vignette above illustrates one example of the numerous situations in our daily lives where we congregate with others to interact in a purposeful manner. Wenger's theory of communities of practice is founded on the social constructionist principle that we gain an understanding of the world through social interaction. This principle acknowledges how a continuous process of interpreting, responding to, and predicting others' actions helps individuals to make sense of their surroundings (Gergen & Gergen, 2004; Wenger, 1998). Learning, Wenger argues, is fundamental to daily life because we are continually trying to establish meaning within given social contexts (Wenger, 1998). Thus, according to Wenger, learning is closely interconnected to identity formation; opportunities to learn and develop who we are, to grow as individuals, are subject to the quality of the interactions that we engage in as a part of everyday life (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Wenger, 1998). We learn through our 'mutual engagement' with others in a common pursuit (Wenger, 1998, p. 73; 2000, p. 229). The word "mutual" indicates a degree of trust and familiarity in how people socially interact as they participate in a shared interest (Wenger, 2000, p. 230). It is this shared interest or "joint enterprise" which draws individuals together into a community of people who, because of the common interest, hold each other accountable for the way they conduct themselves (Wenger, 1998, p. 77; 2000, p. 229). This does not mean, necessarily, that there is homogeneity or harmony. Tensions and different perspectives may arise, but a shared sense of purpose helps individuals to act with a degree of responsibility towards one another. Returning to the vignette, the meeting could be one of the numerous communities of practice in which teachers and school leaders engage as part of their work. This particular community is drawn together with a shared focus on the engagement of families in the reporting process.

LEARNING THROUGH ENGAGING IN SOCIAL PRACTICES

In pursuit of common endeavour, Wenger (1998) argues, individuals share practices to find commonality to help them process understandings. These could include specific actions, use of language, documents or processes, or more tacit and subtle practices where common views are held but not openly expressed (like knowing when it is appropriate to hold a conversation). These practices are subject to continual negotiation through relationships with others and are, therefore, open to interpretation. They are key to our sense-making and relationship-building. Our familiarity with them helps us to connect with others, facilitating learning opportunities as we endeavour to make sense of our surroundings (Wenger, 1998). Wenger uses the term

reification to explain how certain processes or routines take on symbolic meaning; these processes may involve documents, artefacts or storytelling. Reification can be a helpful shortcut, representing prior negotiated meaning and enabling the negotiation of further meaning (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998).

Thus, returning to our vignette, the established pattern of a lunchtime meeting permits a basis of familiarity upon which sense-making can be established. For example, the seating arrangement of the senior staff indicates those who will initiate discussion, enabling a momentum of exchange to unfold according to a set of established protocols. Ideally, if all can engage in mutually productive interaction, drawing on common practices to promote ideas with the understanding that these ideas are acknowledged and absorbed by others, then there are rich learning opportunities—individually and collectively (Wenger, 1998).

However, let's return to the meeting. The deputy principal continues:

> 'Mmm, I appreciate that some families may be very unsure of our new system. An over reliance on technology is going to be off-putting for some of our parents in the first instance. But I think as they wrap their heads around it they'll see the benefits of its interactive nature. You know, they'll be able to check grades, see progress, and ask questions if they don't understand. That's why I want this evening to be as welcoming as possible, make our families feel comfortable so they are not afraid to ask questions.'
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> Kim, who'd only been at the school since the start of the term, was not sure if this was the best forum to raise her concerns. She was actually wondering about the school's approach to connecting with the Māori and Pacific families whose students she was teaching. From her observations so far, families were much more comfortable receiving information at less formal, community events. She wondered about busy working families and about those who had limited access to the internet at home. While she felt sure the management team had thought about these things, she was not sure if there would be an opportunity to discuss the arrangements. Kim wondered, 'If I'm feeling unsure, how will our parents feel?' As she began to raise her hand, the bell rang and her question was drowned out by the scrape of chairs.

The level of engagement in a community of practice is influenced by the degree of competence with which the participant can engage in the relevant social practices (Wenger, 1998; 2000). We may initially participate on the periphery of a community or group of people and later become fully participating and knowledgeable members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The more opportunities we have to participate in and engage with the practices of a given community, the more opportunities we have to learn; and the more competent and familiar we are with the core practices of the community, the greater our sense of belonging.

In this second vignette, we see staff discussing how they can facilitate an opportunity for family and community members to engage with the practices of the school. Specifically, to come to a meeting, much like the one they were currently conducting and engage with the school's digital data systems. The vignette suggests staff want to facilitate what Wenger would describe as mutually productive interaction, where participants use common practices to share ideas, understanding that these ideas will be acknowledged and absorbed by others. Staff are seeking mutual engagement with a clear joint enterprise—to strengthen teaching and learning and raise student achievement. Staff express their desire for family and community to learn, to become familiar and comfortable with the school's systems of engagement and data sharing. At the same time, they hope participants will share their desires for data sharing. In Wenger's construction of communities of practice, this hoped-for mutual interaction provides opportunities for individual and collective growth and avoids non-participation that can lead to (feelings of) powerlessness and marginalisation.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AS CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS

In the vignette, staff are fulfilling the role of 'broker' as described by Wenger (1998, 2000). Brokers can help move knowledge and shift ideas between communities of practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 105; 2000, p. 235). They play a valuable role in ensuring that individuals and the groups they belong to do not remain entrenched with fixed ideas but are open to considering new approaches and continued learning. In this vignette, staff acting as brokers are working to move family and community participants from the periphery of the community of practice to a more central position. This requires participants to gain experience with the school's systems to reimagine and reposition themselves and thus participate in the negotiation of meaning. Wenger (1998, 2000) maintains it is the quality of the relationships the broker forms with others that particularly affects the mutually productive interactions, the transfer of knowledge and the negotiation of meaning.

Let's return to Hapori School and see how the staff's plan might actually work in practice:

> "*Pō Marie whaea*, you're in the right place, come and get a cup of tea, we're just about to start." Kim welcomed Mele into the warm classroom and poured her a cup of tea. "Have you come straight from work?"
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> "Yes, thanks, I didn't have time to go home and change. Alisi's got the little ones in the car." Mele sat down and looked around the circle of chairs.
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> There was Paul, who had invited her, sitting behind a table with his laptop open and speaking quietly to the Deputy Principal. Paul, whose daughter played netball with her girl, Alisi, had told her that they would value her input to the group and that the school was really interested to know what Mele wanted in the school reports. But Mele wasn't sure what she could add. She had only ever come into the school to meet the teachers for Parent/Teacher night and to support Alisi at Fiefia Night.
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> As Paul called the meeting to order, he invited Rev. P. to open with prayer and Mele settled into the familiar words. As soon as the minister had finished, Mrs Hedges, the Deputy Principal who Mele recognised from the netball courts, began to speak.
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> "Thanks Reverend and thanks for coming everyone, it's great to have you here. We appreciate that everyone is busy and so won't keep you too long. Tonight, we want to focus our discussion on the planning that we have been doing around our new reporting system. It would be good to hear what you think would be the best categories for reporting. But first, I'll just quickly run through some of the features of the software we're using so that we all understand the constraints we're working within."

When we look carefully at Wenger's description of broker, someone who shifts entrenched ideas and creates openings for new learning, it becomes clear that the staff members' understanding of their role as brokers will shape how the community of practice functions.

The vignettes describe staff working as brokers who perceive their job to be familiarising family and community members with the systems and artefacts of the school and moving them towards more central participation. This view of the role of brokers and communities of practice normalises a centripetal pattern that assumes participants will move from legitimate peripheral participation in a community towards fuller participation and occupying a more central position. Within this pattern, the broker's role is to facilitate this centripetal movement. A similar centripetal pattern of movement can be seen in educational applications of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) ecological system, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development and apprenticeship models of learning (Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff et al., 2003; Schoenbach et al., 2003). The ubiquity of a centripetal pattern of movement in these widely used theories of practice means that the value of a centripetal movement within a community of practice has come to be

assumed and accepted as the intention (Fish, 2020). The opening vignettes that describe the planning meeting demonstrate the staff members' understanding of their role as brokers in facilitating *whānau[1]* movement from peripheral to central engagement. If school staff understand their role as brokers facilitating this centripetal movement, they will work to familiarise parents with the school and integrate them into the practices of the school. For example, at this meeting, the Deputy Principal shares information about the school's software so that parents understand how reporting will work—understanding the software allows parents to contribute ideas about how it could be used to report achievement.

For participants in a community of practice like the one at Hapori School, a centripetal pattern of participation assumes that when parents first join the group, they would observe how the meetings ran, who spoke when, in what register, and what was open for discussion. As participants become familiar and knowledgeable about the context and practices of the community, they participate more confidently and move towards the centre of practices. For example, Mele has observed the central role of the Deputy Principal to organise the agenda and structure the discussion. A centripetal pattern of participation would assume that as Mele became familiar with this community of practice, she could speak to the different issues during the meeting, ask for items to be put on the agenda and then possibly take on a specific role within the group. In the pattern of the centripetal process is the assumption that learners begin on the periphery, and as they gain experience and mastery, they move to the centre of a community of practice. If the brokers within a community of practice assume that this centripetal movement is an important and valuable goal, then they will work to shift thinking and create openings that allow for family and community participants to move into the community of practice of the school.

IDENTIFYING ASSUMPTIONS AND INEQUITIES

Our brief analysis identifies how the Hapori School Community of Practice structure reinforces two assumptions that create inequity. First, the community of practice reinforces many cultural constructs of mainstream schooling and positions them as neutral or naturally occurring. For example, the use of the agenda, the digital data system and the Deputy Principal steering the meeting. In these vignettes and analyses, the artefacts of the community of practice are shown to be negotiated before community involvement and, therefore, are exclusionary, limiting family and community involvement in any further negotiation of understandings. Secondly, the analysis reveals the power dynamics of peripheral and central participation and the assumption that central participants have the power to broker processes, interactions and learning. The assumptions of a culturally constructed education system and a centripetal movement in participation produces inequities. The inequities arise because the burden is placed on new participants to reimagine and adapt their practices to access the system's benefits. For example, for Mele to have her priorities for student success be acknowledged, implemented and reported to her, she must first learn and master the patterns of participation in this community.

If it is an inequitable assumption that those unfamiliar with the cultural constructs of the education system need to reimagine their practices to become competent and move towards the centre of practice, how can these assumptions be disrupted?

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[1] See glossary at the end of the article for explanation of non-English terms.

DRAWING ON INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORKS

Hoani Te Rangiāniwaniwa Rangihau's graphic description of Māoritanga (Figure 1), as presented by Dean Mahuta (2005), is thought-provoking when considered in response to the question of disrupting assumptions. His description of Māoritanga locates Pākehātanga in a peripheral position. A kaupapa Māori perspective of this description would maintain that this is appropriate positioning (Smith, 2012). This perspective does not exclude productive interactions between Pākehā and Māori but maintains that it is inappropriate for Pākehā to engage in centripetal movement in this context. This example and perspective demonstrate that a permanent peripheral position is a legitimate role within a system of relationships or community of practice.
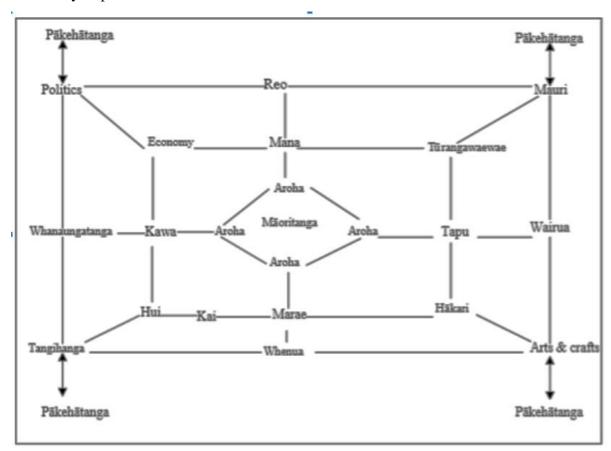

Figure 1: Hoani Te Rangianiwaniwa Rangihau's Graphic Depiction of Te Ao Māori.
Source: Mahuta, D. (2005). *Ko taku rau kotahi* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Otago, p. 3.

Rangihau's indigenous perspective also suggests that inequitable assumptions within the structure of communities of practice can, and should, be disrupted and reimagined. To demonstrate how this can work in practice, let's turn for a moment to another community of practice. This community consisted of 18 teachers from one school, who met regularly with the joint enterprise of strengthening teachers' culturally sustaining practice with Māori students. The group was facilitated by one of the authors, Lindsay, and had been meeting for more than a year.

Lindsay introduced Rangihau's graphic depiction of Māoritanga to her colleagues. Using this lens to look at their work created contrast and allowed teachers to identify their current understanding of Māori communities as occupying the periphery of their educational

community. Clarifying this current perspective then enabled teachers to reimagine and understand themselves in a different position. Through discussion of Rangihau's graphic, teachers came to understand themselves as agents of the mainstream (Pākehātanga) education system and that, in this role, they were positioned on the periphery of their Māori students' world.

Decentering, in this way, can be uncomfortable for participants who are used to occupying central positions within a system. However, using a model that names and permanently positions Pākehā on the periphery gave teachers in the community of practice an opportunity to disrupt assumptions creating inequity. It also opened up space for reimagining practice and structures differently.

One example of this changed pattern of practice occurred when a teacher in the community of practice used the framework to re-evaluate the texts that were being valued in her literacy class (Fish, 2020). Previously, the teacher had introduced the study of Suzanne Collins's novel 'The Hunger Games' (2008) by describing story archetypes and the classical story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Having used Rangihau's framework to rethink the web of relationships operating in and around her classroom, the teacher instead invited students to take their summary of the Theseus story and discuss it at home. Students asked friends and family a specific question: 'What does this story remind you of?' The ideas brought back were centred in class as valued objects of knowledge. This created a rich discussion of traditional and contemporary stories, books, pūrākau, films, family legends and personal experiences. These discussions then formed the basis for studying the novel. This changed approach centred on students' experiences and communities, and the teacher's understanding of story archetypes remained peripheral.

The use of Rangihau's framework within the community of practice and this example of how it created shifts in one teacher's thinking and practice suggests that drawing on indigenous frameworks can support communities of practice to disrupt inequitable assumptions and make positive changes to practice. In seeking to strengthen the communities of practice in schools and reduce the inequities produced by unchallenged assumptions, we asked how further engagement with Indigenous models of practice might support this.

In his discussion of communities of practice, Wenger (2000) highlights that the quality of the relationships is crucial in affecting knowledge transfer. This observation aligns with the principles and values embodied in Pacific research frameworks. Quality relationships and partnerships offer the potential for new understanding to develop, fostering greater openness (Burnett, 2018). When we consider the criticality of quality relationships and the brokerage of knowledge between schools and their communities, it is clear that the imbalance of power in mainstream school settings can create barriers to forming and sustaining equitable relationships (Rodriguez, 2013). Research evidence highlights the importance of partnerships between schools and their communities, and they are promoted as critical to students' academic success (Brooking, 2007; Fan & Chen, 2001). However, despite using terms like partnership which, according to Bastiani (2018), should imply shared purpose, negotiation and mutual respect, home–school relationships may often be more adversarial, focused on rights and power. In agreement, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) highlight that 'there is still more rhetoric than reality about family and school working together as genuine partners' (p. 18). Looking critically at the communities of practice established in mainstream schools through applying Pacific values can move practice from rhetoric to reality.

When we look carefully at what is going on at Hapori College, we can see the rhetoric of the school leaders: 'So let's do our best to make this an inclusive evening for our parents, shall we?', but this rhetoric is not translated into a reality where a partnership is meant to characterise

the relationships. Mele does not feel in a position to contribute her knowledge. This analysis reveals how staff within school settings protect themselves from feelings of discomfort and maintain control by seeking to replicate practices that promote schooling (Adelman, 1992). In our example from Hapori College, we see this protection and control in having one person speaking from the front and using a rigid agenda. When staff do this, their comfort and control are maintained at the expense of family and community participants' feelings of comfort and potential partnership. It is family and community who are expected to reimagine their practice to move into central positions of participation rather than the staff being required to reimagine their practice. How might authentic engagement with key values from Pacific research frameworks shift schools' practice from rhetoric to reality and transform interactions between schools and their communities to create opportunities for shared understanding?

PACIFIC CONCEPTS OF CARE AND RELATIONALITY

This section draws on scholarship on those values in the context of Pacific research as articulated by Anae et al. (2001), Airini et al. (2010) and Va'ai (2017). The values of respect, reciprocity and relationships are useful when considering how to reframe the dominant ways in which schools often engage with their communities and have the potential to ensure interactions are built on a relational foundation. Pacific research frameworks are founded on key principles of respect, reciprocity and relationship building between the researcher and participants (Anae, 2016). For the purpose of this article, the values of respect, reciprocity and relationships are focused on providing insights into how these values could be utilised within communities of practice and engagement with school communities. A common factor across comparative education systems is for educators to 'add snippets of cultural knowledge and practices' (Santamaria & Hoskins, 2015, p. 80) to their practices rather than acknowledge the cultural knowledge of their students and communities is valid and valuable. If education systems wish to promote diversity of pedagogical practices, 'they must place value on other ways of knowing' (Louie et al., 2017, p. 19). When enacted within a community of practice, prioritising relationships and reciprocity authentically ensures that patterns of practice and artefacts are negotiated in relationship with one another, ensuring that previously negotiated practices and knowledge do not work to exclude or invalidate participants' existing cultural values.

Relationality is a central focus in Pacific research and is prioritised to keep the balance between the researcher and participants (Va'ai, 2017). Airini et al. (2010) offer ethical guidance in the space of Pacific education through the Samoan reference *teu le vā.* Anae (2010), in the context of Pacific education research in Aotearoa New Zealand, has proposed the Samoan concepts of the *vā* and *teu le vā* to guide the development of quality relationships between all involved in the research process. The *vā,* meaning 'the sacred space that exists between researchers and researched and *teu le vā*, meaning to nurture and to tidy up' (p. 12). Well-balanced relationships are those where *teu le vā* is occurring, where there is a focus on "secular and sacred commitments, guiding reciprocal 'acting in' and respect for relational spaces" (Anae, 2016, p. 117). Expressions of care embedded in Pacific research approaches can usefully be applied to communities of practice, particularly those working to create home-school relationships. Recognition of the importance of relationality and relationships provides a means through which schools can reimagine communities of practice, achieving greater equity between schools and their communities in decision-making and engagement. One such approach that allows schools to enact *teu le vā* is adopting a spirit of hospitality (Va'ai, 2017).

ADOPTING A SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY

Beginning with a spirit of hospitality (Va'ai, 2017) requires communities of practice to reimagine engagement with relationships at the centre. Approaching an encounter with a spirit of hospitality requires school leaders to put the well-being of family and community participants first and do this at the expense of their own comfort and convenience. A spirit of hospitality begins with understanding that staff will reimagine communities of practice to ensure that family and community can participate without having to learn patterns of participation previously negotiated by the school. In practice, this means schools and communities working together to attain balance and harmony within interconnections and relationships, including expectations and communication. Working together means shifting the emphasis to include processes associated with making, growing and thriving within good and ideal relationships (Airini et al., 2010; Wenger, 1998).

If the lens of a spirit of hospitality were applied to the Hapori College community of practice, it would require a review of many of the practices and artefacts, including the school-driven agenda that places the parent community on the periphery in the *hui* rather than as central, active and agentic (Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2017). For example, the *hui* is opened with a *karakia,* and then the agenda quickly moves on. Santamaria (2009) describes the use of practices in this way as a surface-level cultural acknowledgement, which implies that actions taking place are done as a means to an end. A spirit of hospitality would allocate time for introductions and establishing connections between one another. Making the relationships rather than the agenda the priority of the meeting creates a space where participants can make genuine contributions.

Turning to another community of practice that one of the authors, Emma, had been involved with for several years demonstrates how adopting a spirit of hospitality can reimagine and realign a communities of practice framework. The community of practice that Jane was involved with was focused on developing and sustaining partnership with the schools' Māori and Pacific parent community. The partnership involved regular *hui* focused on the joint enterprise of supporting parents with literacy-related skills and strategies they could use with their whānau. School staff, led by Emma and several Māori and Pacific teachers, attended to support and facilitate. During the evening workshops, the facilitators intentionally fostered a spirit of hospitality by targeting potential constraints that may have prevented families from attending and participating. For example, kai and hot drinks were served. This provision removed the pressure for families to have dinner before or after the meeting and facilitated a forum for fellowship and relationship-building before the *hui* began. Childcare was also provided, parents with small children were welcome to have their children attend the *hui* in the staff room, or they could be supervised by staff. Again, this provision removed pressure on families to organise childcare to attend and made the rhetoric of a family-centred approach a reality.

Within the meetings themselves, the priorities of families were given precedence. At the initial meetings, families were asked what they would like the community of practice to focus on. This approach meant that families' priorities were placed at the centre of the community of practice. Family and community participants were not required to learn new patterns of practice or become familiar with school artefacts to influence the priorities of the meetings or make contributions. A primary purpose was for families to build on their existing repertoire of literacy activities. Families attended together, meaning adults and children could develop literacy activities during the meetings and negotiate patterns of practice they could use together at home. This practice addressed a priority identified by families at the initial meeting. The patterns of

practice and negotiated artefacts in this community of practice describe an approach that draws on a spirit of hospitality and prioritises family and community relationships.

Adopting a spirit of hospitality would generate changes in the community of practice at Hapori College. Potential changes would include providing time and space for building relationships, creating space for everyone to speak and contribute, and ensuring that family and community priorities take precedence. For example, rather than adopting a new reporting system and then working as brokers to teach families about its capabilities, a spirit of hospitality would begin by asking families about their priorities for tracking student achievement and reporting. The community of practice would begin with canvasing the community and drawing on parents' knowledge and priorities. Within the meetings, a spirit of hospitality would provide food and childcare so that these pressures were removed from families and the meeting would have been held at a time that best suited most families without causing a rush. Drawing on a spirit of hospitality to disrupt settled approaches to communities of practice pushes schools to prioritise family and community connection, participation and contribution over school-brokered priorities.

CONCLUSION

As theorised by Wenger, communities of practice are an increasingly popular model for educational partnerships internationally and are becoming a settled approach to home-school partnerships within Aotearoa New Zealand schools. Communities of practice offer the potential for positive and productive relationships. However, when they centre staff and school priorities, communities of practice also have the potential to reinforce inequity. This occurs when communities of practice incorporate patterns of practice and artefacts negotiated before family and community involvement, and staff act as brokers who draw participants into the pre-established patterns of practice. In this model of communities of practice, the comfort of staff and concerns of the school are prioritised, while community and family participants must reimagine and adapt their practices to participate in central roles. By critically examining how communities of practice operate in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, we have argued that the patterns of practice found in Pacific frameworks of relationality can be drawn on to strengthen communities of practice. The learning from these patterns of practice and how they are applied in schools has relevance for communities of practice in other similar education systems. In particular, when schools are willing to embrace discomfort and begin authentic engagement in a spirit of hospitality, it creates space for equitable and productive relationships to flourish.

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GLOSSARY:

Fiafia Night	a community night of Pacific cultural performance and celebration
Hui	meeting
Kai	food
Karakia	prayers
Kaupapa Māori	Māori principles, values and knowledge
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand
Māoritanga	Māori culture, practices and beliefs
Pākehā	The Māori language term for white settlers to Aotearoa New Zealand
Pākehātanga	Pākehā culture, practices and beliefs
"Pō Maire, whaea."	"Good evening, aunty." *Whaea* is a term of address for a woman of an older generation.
Pūrakau	traditional stories
Te ao Māori	the Māori world
Teu le vā	to nurture the sacred space
Vā	The metaphorical space that connects all aspects of life, both animate and inanimate (Wendt, 1999).
Whānau	family