

Downloadable workshop: Pacific voices in Te Whāriki

*Ma'au i lou ofaga, maua'a i lou
fa'asinomaga.*

Keep your identity alive to thrive.



Te Whāriki Online

Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo ā-Ipurangi and Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum Online


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In this downloadable workshop

This workshop is designed to support kaiako of Pacific descent to:

- make sense of *Te Whāriki* as a woven mat for diverse Pacific voices and values (Part one)
- create a local curriculum that represents Pacific pedagogy inclusive of the spirituality, identities, and languages of Pacific peoples (Part two).



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Part one – Weaving your Whāriki

Read

Te Whāriki gives an explanation of how the whāriki metaphor depicts the ECE curriculum on pages 10 – 11.



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Part one – Weaving your Whāriki

Part one is intended to guide the content of your whāriki.

Your whāriki will grow to represent “deciding what matters here” for your Pacific children and families.

Plan

What materials will you use?

Who will be involved with attention given to the relational space that honours immediate and extended family?

How will your whāriki be used?



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Weaving as an art form and metaphor

“Pasifika share with Māori the tradition of weaving whāriki, using patterns that are specific to their particular Pacific Island nation” (*Te Whāriki*, page 10).

The diversity of Pacific weaving traditions is symbolic of the increasingly multi-ethnic heritages and identities of Pacific children attending early learning services.

Weaving is an art-form that communicates history, genealogy and connection to place. Weaving can be seen as a way of knowing the world (both social and material) and having a sense of belonging.



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Responsibility to our community

Consider

Why do families choose your service?

What is important to them and why?

Weave

Weave the key points from your answers to the questions above into your whāriki.



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Tapasā: Cultural Competency Framework

[Tapasā cultural competencies framework](#) highlights values and knowledge important to Pacific peoples.

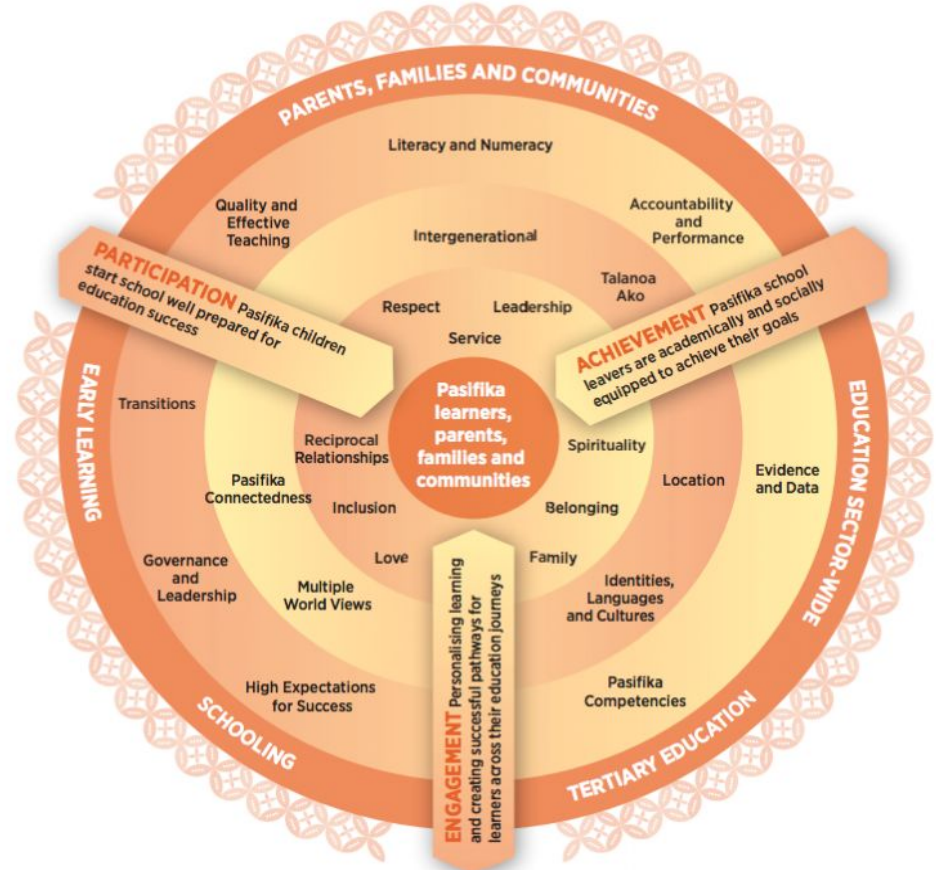
As a group

Study the values and knowledge in the second circle from the centre.

Which of these represents “what matters here” in your context?

Weave these into your whāriki.

The Pasifika Success Compass



“Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work”

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.

Te Whāriki, page 63

Consider

What does it mean to nourish the uniqueness of a Pacific child in our context?

What elements from your discussion will be woven into your whāriki?



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Part Two – A Pacific whāriki in practice

Part two of this workshop explores ways in which the visual arts of Pacific cultures can be an expression and interpretation of the Principles, Strands, and Learning Outcomes of *Te Whāriki*.



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The “arts within us”

The “arts within us” signifies the idea that the arts is an expression of creation and connection that tells stories of culture, communities, traditions, and genealogy.

Read, reflect, discuss

The next two slides have quotes from Pacific artists, speaking of the influences and motivations for their artistic expression.

If you were asked for a quote about the “arts within you”, what would it say?

Discuss your ideas at a team fono.



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Voices of Pacific artists

The best thing my mother told me was ...
We are very rich with our art and our
culture. Now, whenever I paint. I feel I'm
doing it not just for myself, not just for my
family, but for my people, my culture.

Fatu Feu'u

Mallon, S and Pereira, P. F. (1997). *Speaking in colour:
Conversations with artists of Pacific Island heritage*.
Wellington: Te Papa Press.



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Voices of Pacific artists

It's really hard to explain, but for me painting becomes a direct link to my ancestors. It's like being able to see them. The visual is the painting, the physical is actually a feeling.

Lily Laita

Mallon, S and Pereira, P.F. (1997). *Speaking in colour: Conversations with artists of Pacific Island heritage*. Wellington: Te Papa Press.



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“Tīvaevae is a language for us”

Watch

In this video on the Te Papa website, Cook Island Māori women talk about the value of tīvaevae making.

[Watch: Cook Islands Tīvaevae, stitched with love](#)

Consider

What messages do you take from their tuatua about the place of art and visual languages?

Watch: Cook Islands Tīvaevae, stitched with love

Discover the art of tīvaevae (quilting) with Cook Islands women from the Wellington region.



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The place of Pacific storytelling

Storytelling is deeply embedded in the oral language histories and arts of Pacific cultures. Storytelling evokes a collective practice that includes history, values, beliefs, customs, and relationships.

Pacific storytelling can take many forms, such as chants, song, poetry, myths, and legends.

Additional activity

Watch these longer videos about Pacific storytelling, featuring [Jody Jackson-Becerra](#) and [Frances C. Koya Vaka'uta](#).

What inspiration for your curriculum do you draw?



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What are our visual languages?

Consider

Reflect on your own personal experiences with Pacific arts practices. Consider the engagement of the collective, intergenerational practice and associated cultural meanings.

On a piece of paper

- List art forms and visual languages associated with your Pacific culture/s.
- For each, discuss and record the cultural values and purposes they serve – as the women do in the “Stitched with love” video.
- How do these compare with the values and knowledge you have identified in your whāriki (part one of this workshop)?
- Are there overlaps and similarities?
- Are there new values to be added to your whāriki?

Awakening the Pacific creative spirit

In an article in *The First Years Journal Ngā Tau Tuatahi*, Susana Smith asks for greater focus on Pacific visual languages and culture in early learning services.

She argues for the use of Pacific patterns, symbols, metaphor, and narratives to affirm, connect, and awaken the Pacific creative spirit.

Because of “the privileging of Western histories, theories, practices, and discourses”, Pacific visual languages and cultures are “in danger of becoming mere artefacts of curiosity, rather than a living curriculum.”

Smith, S. (2018). “Tau tufuga Niue: Contextualising arts in the early years within Aotearoa New Zealand”, *The First Years: Ngā Tau Tuatahi, New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 20 (1): 24-27.



Suggestions for a “living curriculum” of art and storytelling

- Be guided by “the arts within us” – practice art and storytelling that reflects the collective within your setting.
- Look into the particular stories and art practices that are unique to your families, and the countries, districts, and villages they come from.
- Draw inspiration from the work of artists and storytellers that share the Pacific cultures you aspire to support and nurture.
- Let children learn from the expertise of elders in ways that inspire them – the children – to create.



Suggestions for a “living curriculum” of art and storytelling

Our art is about cultural continuity and sustainability. It's more than “just art”. It's more than just providing paint brush and paper, it's more than just drawing pretty pictures with crayons, and it's more than dancing in cultural costumes.

Lorraine Pauuvale-Paea, Akoteu Kato Kakala



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How fine is your mat?

Te Whāriki a mat for “all” to stand
and the weaving of Pasifika voices.

That of our ancestors, our stories, our histories,
our languages, our cultures, our identities.

Hear my voice, the Pasifika child

I am unique, a child of my forebears.

A spiritual being, a dynamic multiplicity

Connected to my past, present and future.

The fibres of our Whāriki

the weaving of Pasifika voices, yet to come.

[Manutai Leaupepe, Jacoba Matapo, and Elizabeth
\(Peta\) Ravlich](#)

Consider

What does weaving the voices “yet to come”
mean for your context?



Additional resources

[Children's working theories about identity, language, and culture](#)

A Samoan medium and an English medium ECE that focussed on children's working theories about identity, language, and culture. This links to the short and the full report.

[Fagogo - An Extra-ordinary Story, Aue!](#)

Jody Jackson-Becerra weaves her magic using Fāgogo, a traditional Pacific Island technique of story-telling.

[How do leaders support improvement in Pacific early childhood services](#)

This ERO publication highlights the crucial role of leaders in Pacific early childhood services.

[Navigating leadership in Pasifika early childhood education: Traversing the tides of change](#)

Jacoba Matapo discusses the importance of cultural values guiding leadership in Pacific services.

The First Years Journal Ngā Tau Tuatahi, New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education (2018) Special issue: Indigenous Pacific pedagogies, 20 (1).

[Tattoo and Tapa: Reclaiming Pacific Symbols](#)

Frances C. Koya Vaka'uta explores symbol as text and the heritage art forms of tapa and tattooing in Sāmoa and Tonga.

Closing Palōveape

‘Oku hange ‘a e tangata ha fala ‘oku lālanga

Humankind is like a mat being woven.

This signifies the idea that a Tongan child is woven from strands that are fundamental to the essence of being Tongan.



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