**“General idea” – The tension between tradition and change.**

**Specific ideas trigger:**

**P – Progress  
E – Elders  
A – Advice  
R – Relationships and  
L – Love**

Explain how the tension between tradition and change is developed in a poem you have studied in class.

In the poem “Mother of Pearl” by Karlo Mila, the tension between tradition and change is developed. Mila does this by discussing more specific ideas that are important to Mila and help her to retain contact with her culture as a contemporary Pacific Islander living in New Zealand. These ideas are the attainment success while retaining tradition, the respect held for elders, the wisdom gained from these elders, and the importance of friendships.

The importance of the attainment of success, while retaining contact with tradition and culture is developed in the first stanza using symbolism and simile. This stanza starts with the popular image of the contemporary female Pacific Islander. She is successful in Tertiary education, with “degrees up their sleeves”, and often had a well-paying job “Black Pearl girls in business suits.” However, these women still maintain contact with their culture and traditions. Mila develops this idea by using symbolism in the line “flowers in their hair.” These flowers can be seen to represent the successful women’s contact with their culture, while also succeeding in changing 21st century New Zealand society. Mila also uses a simile in the line “expectations high as heels.” These women traditionally have high expectations placed on them by their parents and relatives to achieve. This simile effectively connects the high expectation of the young women’s relatives to the high heels worn in their high paying, often urban careers. By using symbolism and simile, Mila effectively develops the tension between tradition and change faced by contemporary female Pacific Islanders as they adapt to New Zealand society and succeed in both education and their professions.

Mila then discusses the high regard contemporary Pacific Islanders retain for their elders as links to their culture and tradition by using rhetorical questions and similes. These women are described as wise and knowledgeable and a clearly looked up to by Mila herself…