Innovative Pathways from School:
Taking the first step

Final Report

2006

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Executive summary

The *Innovative Pathways from School* study was designed to address an information gap about the programmes that support "at-risk" students at low-decile secondary schools to make successful transitions from school to the workforce or further education and training. We examined a sample of non-conventional Year 12 and 13 programmes at seven schools. All the programmes had an emphasis on providing students with qualifications, making links with local employers or tertiary providers, and assisting students to develop "work-readiness" skills and behaviours.

Data for this study were collected in three phases. In phase 1, at the start of 2002, we visited the schools to interview 119 students who were beginning the programmes. Most of the students in this study identified as coming from one of three main ethnic groups (Pasifika, Māori, or Pākehā). About one-third were in each group. Along with the 119 students, we also formally interviewed 24 school staff, 56 parents, and 18 external providers (of course content, training, or work experience). In the phase 1 report we summarised these findings as a series of case studies (Boyd, McDowall, & Cooper, 2002).

At the end of 2002, in phase 2, we returned to the schools at the time when most of the students were leaving the programmes to gather their perspectives on their 2002 school year. In phase 2, we interviewed 74 of the 75 students who were still at school, and 23 young people who had left school during 2002. We also interviewed 23 school staff and 44 parents.

The third phase of this research occurred in mid-2004 when 61 of the young people were re-contacted, approximately one year after they had left school, in order to ascertain the longer-term impact of the programmes on their post-school destinations and experiences.

Key aspects of effective careers and transition support

In exploring the experience of "at-risk" students as they made the transition from school, this study examined the young people's experiences of senior secondary school as a whole, and by doing so addressed two key educational concerns: What encourages students who are disenchanted with the education system to re-engage, stay at school, and achieve? And, What school experiences support young people to feel prepared for the transition from school?

In the seven schools, transition support (that is, information, advice, guidance, and career development activities) was embedded into the fabric of the programmes of study. The embedded nature of this support created a relationship, experiences, and information web around students, the elements of which reinforced each other. To create this web, all of the schools had designed

courses that offered new experiences to students and provided transition support in a wide range of formats. There were seven main aspects of these programmes that emerged as supporting the young people's retention and transition. This study suggests that these supports are more important for students from low-decile schools who may not have experienced much academic success and whose family frames of reference may not include tertiary study or a broad range of occupations. The main features of these seven aspects are described below.

1) Offering a relevant curriculum to create positive attitudes towards school

Prior to their entry to the programmes, many of the young people appeared to be alienated from a school system and curriculum that they perceived as not relevant to their interests or future plans. Most of those who stayed at school for the full 2002 year experienced a dramatic turnaround in their attitudes towards school. One key reason for these attitudinal changes was that students perceived the vocational courses they were studying to be different and more motivating than past subjects as they offered a practical and relevant curriculum, work experience and other opportunities to learn by "doing", and opportunities for students to experience academic success. Having a positive attitude towards school supported students' retention and transition from school. Those who had positive attitudes were more likely to have higher attendance rates, stay at school longer, gain more qualifications, and feel more prepared for life outside school than their counterparts with less positive attitudes.

2) The use of student-centred pedagogies to build relationships

The most commonly mentioned reason for students' attitude changes was improved relationships with teachers. The data suggest that the nature of the relationship building that occurred within these programmes differed in nature from that which occurred in mainstream classes within the same school. The whānau or family-orientated approach that underpinned the programmes, with one key teacher having responsibility for a class group for more than a standard subject allocation, supported teachers to build a relationship web around students.

The information we collected suggested that teachers made substantial use of student-centred pedagogies. They had high expectations of students, reframed their interactions with students as a dialogue between adults, created a sense of respect and whānau in their classes, provided mentoring and pastoral care, planned learning activities based on students' interests, and carefully scaffolded learning situations to ensure that students had the opportunity to develop teamwork and leadership skills and experience successes. These practices provided a safety net for many of the students that gave them an individualised educational experience, supported them to feel connected to school, contributed to their retention at school, and supported them to gain qualifications and make plans for their future.

3) Access to careers and transition support

Another reason why the young people viewed school more positively was because they felt prepared for life outside school due to the access they had to careers and transition information, advice, and support to assist their decision making. Students received careers and transition support from most of the people they came into contact with at school or outside school. Although family members and friends played a key role in assisting the young people's career decision making, in retrospect, they found this to be less useful than the support they accessed through school. This gives some indication of the extra role the teachers and careers staff from low-decile schools play in supporting young people as they take the step from school.

Careers and transition support was provided by both subject teachers and careers staff, and was integrated into the curriculum and offered in an ongoing way to class groups and individuals. The provision of this support was facilitated by the programmes' whānau approach.

The most common forms of careers and transition support offered were: the provision of text-based information such as leaflets about jobs, tertiary handbooks, or access to websites; talks from tertiary or industry visitors; work experience placements or attendance at tertiary taster courses; visits to tertiary institutions, employers, and Career Expos; the completion of career planning exercises; and individualised discussions and mentoring. Most of the types of support that were provided were useful to some, indicating a need for schools to offer a diverse range of information and activities. In particular, students valued the support that was related to their interests.

Some types of support, and aspects of the way it was provided, were mentioned as particularly beneficial by larger numbers. The young people highly valued the opportunities they had to have "real" experiences of their interests, and the mentoring they were offered by school staff, in particular, their subject teachers. Subject teachers acted as careers and course brokers, and across schools, had evolved a similar approach to providing formal and informal careers and transition support that was an extension of the student-centred approaches they used. This approach was characterised by a focus on the whole person, the provision of support that was tailored to students' interests and integrated into the curriculum, the combining of information provision with "real" experiences that assisted students to explore their options, individual advising and life coaching in class-time, and discussions that were handled in an honest manner and which assisted the young people to "unpack" information and make choices.

4) Learning by doing: Providing "real" experiences

Most of the schools in this study provided opportunities for students to explore their career options through a choice of work experience placements, Gateway, or tertiary taster or foundation courses. These "hands-on" learning experiences were the form of transition support that the young people found the most beneficial, and were another of the factors responsible for their change in attitudes towards school.

Some of the reasons work experience placements (and practical tertiary courses similar to work experience) were regarded so highly was because they allowed students to explore their likes and dislikes, find a match between their interests and career pathways, and find out more about the worlds of work and tertiary study. Many of these experiences connected students with new people whom they could draw on for information, advice, and in some cases future employment. These experiences also provided opportunities for young people to experience success, gain confidence, develop vocational and social skills, and gain qualifications.

This, and other studies (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004; Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003), show that career and course tasters can be very beneficial for young people. This study shows that these opportunities are not so readily available to young people once they leave school. This suggests that providing as many opportunities as possible for young people to explore a range of options, whilst they are still at school, is a key form of transition support. These exploration opportunities created bridges between school and the tertiary environment and enabled young people to change their mind in a low-stakes environment.

5) Bridges to the tertiary environment

National data show that those who complete tertiary study will be better off financially in the longer term than those who do not. Acknowledging this, some of the schools had developed effective bridges between school and the tertiary environment. Qualification and curriculum alignment between schools and tertiary providers made tertiary pathways more transparent. This was supported by relationship-building activities with key people at tertiary institutions.

The discussions young people had with school staff supported them to act on their tertiary study aspirations. School staff gave them information about the pathways available to higher qualifications, assisted them to make the "right" decision, and in some cases provided direct support, for example, by assisting them to complete application forms.

Although many of the young people tended not to follow through on all of the details of their tertiary study plans, supporting young people to set some form of concrete plan at school, so that they could follow through aspects of it later, appeared to be one way of encouraging tertiary participation. The young people's initial activities had the potential to set a pattern for subsequent activities. A number of those who started tertiary study at polytechnics or universities in the first year after they left school had started to, or were planning to, continue their study to higher levels. This tertiary staircasing was not evident for those who did not study in their first year, or who initially started out studying at PTEs. A similar pattern is shown in national statistics (Ministry of Education, 2004). One explanation for this pattern relates to the characteristics of the young people who study at these two types of institutions. Those with higher qualifications tended not to study at PTEs.

Some of the teachers in this study encouraged students to go to preferred providers (often polytechnics); others organised visits to a range of providers so students could explore their

options. Both approaches were beneficial for some. Although many of the young people did study with the schools' preferred providers, others studied with alternative providers (mostly PTEs).

Some teachers did not encourage students to go to PTEs. In some cases this was due to a belief that they should be encouraging students towards options perceived to be of higher status. National data (Ministry of Education, 2004) show that students who study at PTEs have lower progression rates. This trend was observed for the young people in this study. Our data also showed that those who studied at PTEs appeared to be less well informed about the qualification environment and the pathways open to them. This indicates a need for young people who study at tertiary institutions to be provided with more information about qualifications and the pathways they support, and for school staff to assist students to access information on the full range of options to ensure they are fully informed.

6) Opportunities to gain qualifications

Prior to their entry into the programmes a substantial number of the young people had low or no qualifications, and did not consider that they had achieved particularly well. By the end of 2002 most of those who stayed at school had gained enough qualifications to remove them from the low or no qualifications category, and their perceptions of their achievement had become more positive. For many of these young people, success bred success. The internal and self-paced nature of unit standard assessments, along with teacher approaches that ensured students had successes and were able to study subjects they considered relevant, led to increased academic confidence which contributed to increased confidence to participate at school.

One challenge for the schools was achieving a balance between providing learning activities related to students' interests, while also providing qualifications. Some offered national or locally-developed certificates, and others, collections of unit standards relating to students' interests. Offering students the reality of gaining one or more certificates, and in particular, those with a recognised pathway, was more beneficial, both in the short and longer term, than offering individualised clusters of unit standards. Those who gained certificates were more satisfied with their school experiences. They were more knowledgeable about the qualification environment, had developed firmer tertiary study plans, and tended to act on these plans.

The data also showed gaps in students' and parents' understanding of the qualifications environment. Some did not have a "big picture" overview about qualifications or the pathways they supported. Having this "big picture" appeared to motivate students to complete a full qualification and supported their post-school decision making.

7) Opportunities to develop life skills

The students, parents, and school staff in this study valued a broad range of outcomes from schooling. Enabling students to pursue a range of outcomes, that is, academic, vocational, and social, was a key aim of the programmes. Work experience placements and other authentic

learning experiences were the main vehicles through which the young people developed vocational and social skills and attributes. Post-school, many of the young people continued to draw on these skills. Those mentioned as being transferred to new environments included: self-confidence and motivation; social and communication skills; computer skills; practical vocational skills; teamwork and leadership behaviours; and study skills.

With the exception of teamwork and leadership behaviours, many of the attributes mentioned fall under the umbrella of traditional foundation skills, rather than the critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills that are suggested as being necessary for young people to function in the knowledge society (Gilbert, 2005; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). But this study and other research (Hipkins, 2004), suggest that vocational courses may be more aligned with the skills of the knowledge society than mainstream academic NCEA courses, as they potentially can offer young people not only opportunities to "learn about", but also to learn by "doing" in authentic environments and therefore to transfer their learning.

The findings from this study suggest that the intangible and social outcomes of schooling are important in assisting young people's transition from school. The existing qualification regime does not fully recognise these social outcomes in the same way that vocational and academic outcomes are recognised. The findings from this and other studies (Hawk & Hill, 1996), suggest that giving more equal recognition to these outcomes via formal qualifications could potentially impact on early school leaving and alienation from school.

Matching policy and practice

It is clear from this and other studies that young people who are "at-risk" from leaving school without transition plans could benefit from being offered more careers and transition support than may be currently available to them. This study alerted us to tensions that exist between the young people's experiences of transition and school and national practices and policies that are designed to facilitate this experience.

A tension was evident in the weight schools placed on supporting young people to act on short-term goals vs. developing self-managing skills for the future. School was the main place these young people accessed careers and transition support. Post-school, many did not appear to be using the information gathering and career planning skills they had developed at school. All schools offered students the opportunity to learn these skills, but these experiences were often framed as a next-step planning exercise rather than as an opportunity to learn a life and/or career planning process for the future.

The transition literature suggests that career process skills need to be related to the realities of the transition environment as young people experience it (Carpenter & Inkson, 1999). In the short term, the young people benefited from next-step planning exercises, but the number of changes in direction some had post-school suggests there is a need to shift the focus of these exercises so that

more emphasise is placed on the longer-term goal of learning to self-manage. Introducing earlier opportunities for students to learn life and career planning skills (alongside information provision and hands-on career exploration experiences) may be one way of supporting both those who have changes in direction, and those who do not have a "big picture" overview of schooling and qualifications.

Another tension was how best to support a diverse group of students, some of whom were supported to take the step from school on a predefined pathway: the "planners", and others who were not: the "explorers". International research indicates that the "new workers" or "explorers" in today's environment are likely to go through a protracted period of trialling different options (Bye, 2001; OECD, 2000). This pattern was evident for some of the young people in this study, whereas others, particularly those doing apprenticeships or working in trades, appeared to be on the traditional pathways of "old workers".

To best support young people, policies and programmes need to cater for the co-existence of both these conceptions. Some of the schools in this study had developed programmes that acknowledged both by offering more than one transparent pathway alongside opportunities for student-driven choice and career exploration.

In the tertiary sector, Modern Apprenticeships, foundation courses, and to a lesser extent university bridging courses, mostly "pathway" young people towards a single institution or destination. The courses that require young people to specialise early are underpinned by assumptions about linear progression. These initiatives appear to be addressing the needs of the "planners". The "explorers" appear to be less well served—and it is this group that provides the policy and practice challenge. Left to their own devices some of these young people feel overwhelmed by their circumstances and the potential cost of exploring a range of options.

The data from this study suggest that some of the needs of the "explorers" could be served by offering formal trans-institution career exploration courses. These courses could have a number of functions. They could keep young people engaged within the education system and gaining qualifications whilst they explore their options in a low-stakes environment. They could also provide those who are "at-risk" with ongoing access to mentors, and offer young people further opportunities to develop life and career planning skills.

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1. The research

Introduction

The *Innovative Pathways from School* study was designed to address an information gap about programmes that support "at-risk" students at low-decile[1] schools to make successful transitions from secondary school. This study aimed to provide insights into the nature and impact of the programmes at seven low-decile schools that were designed to support "at-risk" students. In collecting information on these programmes, we attempted to provide some answers to the following questions:

- What are the features of effective programmes?
- Do the programmes assist the retention of students at school?
- Does participation in the programme assist students' transition to further study or work? How does this occur?

Higher proportions of the students at low-decile schools, and in particular students from the groups that are over-represented at these schools—that is, Māori and Pasifika students—leave school with no qualifications (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). As a result, these young people have fewer tertiary study and employment options available to them, placing them in a position where they are more "at-risk" of not making a successful transition from school.

Most studies concerning the education and achievement of disadvantaged groups call for more resources and programmes for these groups and more information on programmes that work. Wilson and Young (1998) surveyed representatives from 23 schools as part of a follow-up study on the implementation of a career information and guidance policy in New Zealand schools. The school staff who participated in the study, especially those located in low-decile schools, identified the need to target "at-risk" students with transition and career programmes. Scott and Brislen (1998) examined education and training issues that influenced the employability of Māori. They conclude that further information on secondary school initiatives in vocational learning needs to be disseminated in order to support the development of programmes to assist Māori learners. Anae, Anderson, Benseman, and Coxon (2002) suggest that more stepping stones are

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[1] Low-decile schools are defined as those with a decile rating of 1 to 3. Decile refers to the socioeconomic status of the parent community and the area surrounding the school. When the schools were approached in 2001 all were decile 1–3. Some have since changed decile.

needed to assist Pasifika students in their transition to tertiary education. It is in this context that this current study was developed.

The transition environment in New Zealand

Innovative Pathways from School explores how schools and "at-risk" young people made use of the national, regional, and school-based transition initiatives and resources outlined below, and the role of school staff in providing careers and transition support.

Careers and transition initiatives and resources in schools

In 1995 the delivery of career information and guidance in New Zealand schools was reviewed. From this review a document of good practice, *Career Information and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (Ministry of Education, 1997), was published. This document aimed to support schools to assist students to choose appropriate pathways both at school, and from school, and develop the skills required to manage their transition. A few years later National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) were developed which required schools to provide all students with career guidance and, specifically, target students who were "at-risk" of leaving school "unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training" (NAG 1.vi, Ministry of Education, 2000). These changes gave local control to schools over the provision of career education.

In 2003, to support this shift, the document *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* was published (Ministry of Education, 2003). The document provided suggestions for teachers about how to integrate career exploration activities and advice into the curriculum. Schools now provide a variety of resources and experiences to students to support their transition from school including: career exploration activities embedded within the curriculum; individual career profiling and guidance; and access to a range of resources, experiences, and people.

The Youth Transitions Strategy

The Ministry of Social Development (2003) reports that national data indicate that at any point in time a sizable proportion (10–15 percent) of young people aged 15 to 19 may not be participating in employment, education, or training. Statistics New Zealand (2003) data show that the unemployment rate for young people aged 15–19 is at least twice the normal average than that of the general population. In 2003, the Youth Transitions Strategy was initiated in response to concerns about youth unemployment and a lack of coherence in policies and initiatives designed to support young people as they made the transition from school. To support this strategy the Government increased the financial support targeted to transition, and developed the following goal, as stated in the 2003 budget:

> …to have all 15–19-year-olds engaged in appropriate education, training, work, or other activities leading to long-term economic independence and well-being by 2007 (New Zealand Treasury, 2003, p. 9).

This strategy has existing and new initiatives under its umbrella and has functioned to raise the profile of careers and transition support. Existing initiatives include career support and information resources for young people and adults provided by Career Services. These include regional Career Centres, the KiwiCareers website,[2] and CareerPoint freephone. In addition, Career Services staff provide support to local schools. The schools and the young people in this study made use of a number of these resources and services.

Five main national transition initiatives are also located under the umbrella of the Youth Transitions Strategy. These initiatives were all used by at least one of the schools in this study. They are:

1. **The Secondary/Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) administered by the Ministry of Education.** The STAR fund was set up to support secondary schools to assist students to find suitable pathways into work or tertiary study. Schools apply for and use STAR funds for a variety of purposes. These include providing: a range of connections to the tertiary environment such as vocational or tertiary "taster" courses; increased access to careers and transition resources; programmes for "at-risk" students; and courses or qualifications that could be costly to fund. All but one of the schools in this study use STAR funding to run the programmes described in this report.

2. **The Gateway programme administered by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).[3]** This programme funds secondary schools, in conjunction with employers, to provide work experience and on-the-job training for Years 11–13 students, that is linked to their school courses. One of the schools in this study was part of the Gateway pilot.

3/4. **The Youth Training and Training Opportunities programmes administered by TEC.[4]** Young people who are over 16, have no or low qualifications, and have left school, are eligible for these vocational programmes. These programmes can run at alternative education sites or sites within secondary schools. They aim to provide trainees with recognised qualifications and skills that will enable them to find work or continue on to further training. One of the schools in this study used Youth Training funding for their courses.

5. **The Modern Apprenticeships scheme administered by TEC.[5]** Although this scheme applies to school-leavers, some of the schools in this study tailored their programmes to be pre-apprenticeship foundation courses. Students were able to credit some of their schoolwork to a Modern Apprenticeship.

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[2] http://www.kiwicareers.govt.nz

[3] Skill New Zealand initially funded these initiatives. It was replaced by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

[4] http://www.tec.govt.nz

[5] http://www.modern-apprenticeships.govt.nz/rendered/home.html

The development of regional initiatives is also part of the Youth Transitions Strategy. This aim is being actioned by the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, which is developing regional initiatives and local business innovations to reduce youth unemployment. The Canterbury Development Corporation's ActionWorks[6] programme, to which two of the schools in this study referred students, is an example of a regional initiative.

Some of the national initiatives described above had their foundations in past governments' vision of a "seamless" education system. This system enables senior secondary school students to study university, polytechnic, Industry Training Organisation (ITO), and Private Training Establishment (PTE) courses while they are still at school, and enables institutions and consortia to develop unique unit standards and qualifications tailored to local needs. This flexibility has enabled the initiatives outlined above to be used by schools to develop unique programmes in response to local needs.[7]

The role of those who provide careers and transition support

The transition between school and work or further study in the 21st century is viewed as becoming more complex as society shifts from the industrial era to the knowledge society. This shift has led to global economic changes in the structure of the labour market and a decrease in the demand for unskilled workers. There has been a related increase in youth unemployment, increased growth in the range of tertiary study options and institutions, increased demand for higher education, longer periods of semi-dependency for youth, an increase in the flexibility of work arrangements, and an increased need for constant upskilling and on-the-job training (Vaughan & Boyd, 2005). These changes have resulted in young people having a much wider range of options to consider when they are making decisions about which courses to study and where to study. In this shifting environment, concern has been expressed that policies and programmes that are designed to support young people's transition are still underpinned by assumptions of linear pathways and a "career for life" (Wyn & Dwyer, 1999).

These shifts in the labour market and tertiary study environment have resulted in changes to the way career services are delivered at school and at a national level. Smith (1999) and Patton (2001) describe how the role of the career counsellor is shifting away from the traditional focus on information provision towards educating individuals to use information to plan and self-manage

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[6]   ActionWorks staff provide services designed to guide youth aged 13–19 to find training, education, or employment options. More information about ActionWorks can be found at:
       http://www.actionworks.org.nz

[7]   An example of local development by one of the schools in this study is the Tongariro High School and Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Certificate. This certificate includes unit standards designed by a group of schools called the Tongariro Consortium. Another example is the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) Short Course Certificate developed by MIT and Aorere College.

their careers. This change is seen as a necessity by Smith (1999) and Patton (2001) given the flexibility and unpredictability of the "new" workplace.

Elkin and Sutton (2000) suggest that the shift to local control by schools over the provision of careers and transition support, in combination with the reprioritising and restructuring of national and regional career services, has also redefined the role of the people in schools who provide transition support and careers advice to students. They perceive this role to have changed from the traditional one of providing advice and assistance to senior students who were going to university, polytechnic, or a college of education. This role now encompasses the provision of individualised information and advice, to all high school students, and potentially primary school students, on a range of full- and part-time employment and study options including those on offer at institutions such as PTEs. It also includes the provision of career exploration activities to be used within the curriculum. This current study explores the role of school staff in providing careers and transition support in this environment.

The design of this study

The *Innovative Pathways from School* study was carried out in three phases. This current report summarises the information collected from phases 2 and 3. Findings from the first phase of the research are summarised in the report by Boyd et al. (2002).

Methodology

There is little research information available on the transition experiences of "at-risk" New Zealand students and on vocational education programmes in New Zealand schools. Therefore this research was designed to be exploratory in nature. We initially used a case study methodology to collect information on the non-conventional[8] programmes at seven low-decile schools that were developed to encourage Year 12 or Year 13 students "at-risk" of leaving school early to stay at school and gain qualifications. We collected information about the structure and content of these programmes, the partnerships made between schools and tertiary providers and employers, and the way transition support was provided. We defined transition support as any form of careers or transition information, advice, or guidance, including career development activities. A second key part of the study was the longitudinal tracking of a sample of students from each school.

We used both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. We interviewed students, teachers, parents or caregivers, and off-site providers of training, course materials, or work experience. We collected student achievement and attendance data, as well as information from school documents.

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[8]   Years 12 and 13 courses that in 2002 were outside the conventional qualifications programme of Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary.

Defining "at-risk" students and "transition"

For the purposes of this study "at-risk" and "transition" have been defined in relation to the *National Administration Guidelines*. These guidelines define "at-risk" students as those "who have been identified by the school as being at-risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training" (NAG 1.vi, Ministry of Education, 2000).

Both concepts can be defined in a wider sense. For example, in looking at the ways young people can be supported to become resilient, Withers and Russell (2001) described a "risk continuum", with those who are more at-risk being "more likely to experience multiple negative future events" (p. X). These include negative events related to transition, such as early school-leaving, but also events related to risk factors in the individual, the school, the family, or the community. Researchers also argue that the definition of "transition" needs to be broadened to go beyond the transition to work or study by incorporating exploration of changes in family, household, health, or lifestyle (Raffe, 2001).

Given that "at-risk" is defined in relation to transitions to study or work in the *National Administration Guidelines*, and that schools are specifically required to target these students for career guidance programmes, the narrower definitions of "at-risk" and "transition" are the ones used for this study.

Finding and selecting the programmes

Sourcing data on innovative programmes that assisted students' transition from school proved a more complex task than we initially envisioned, as there were no central records on the programmes available in schools, or their outcomes. We attempted to find programmes that were innovative, acknowledging in the absence of comparative data that this concept could be subjective.[9]

We selected schools that provided a programme or "package" for students that was more than a single class or subject. To provide a range of programmes and schools, we took factors such as school location (rural/urban), the type of programme offered, geographical location, and school size into account. The seven schools and their associated programmes included in this study were:

- the Advanced Studies Academies at Linwood College, Christchurch;
- the Academy programme at Aranui High School, Christchurch;
- the World of Work and Sir Edmund Hillary and Outdoor Education and Tourism Studies programmes at Tongariro High School, Turangi;
- the Institute of Studies at Western Heights High School, Rotorua;
- the Tertiary Pathways programme at Aorere College, Auckland;
- the Senior Integrated programme at James Cook High School, Auckland; and

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[9] More information about the methods used to identify a range of programmes is contained in the phase 1 report (Boyd et al., 2002).

- the Gateway programme at Auckland Girls' Grammar School, Auckland.

Some of the schools offered courses in one or two subject areas, while others offered a wide range of choices within an umbrella programme. If the school offered more than three courses, the programme leader was asked to help us select a sample of three courses by identifying those that:

- attracted the largest number of students "at-risk" of leaving school unprepared for transition;
- assisted students the most in their transition; and/or
- were the most innovative.

The programmes that were selected stood alongside each school's "mainstream" NCEA and Bursary programmes. They were mostly vocational in nature and/or were developed to support students' interests in areas such as sport, outdoor education, hospitality, engineering, and tourism, and provide pathways to local employment opportunities or tertiary training.

Selecting students

To provide a sample of students who could be followed through each programme, we attempted to include approximately 15 students from each school. In schools where three courses were selected, approximately five students were selected from each course. The programme co-ordinators were asked to identify students they considered to be the most "at-risk" of leaving school unprepared for transition, and these students were included in the sample. In cases where the programme co-ordinator considered that all or most of the students were potentially "at-risk", students were randomly selected from class lists, ensuring that both male and female students were represented.

Data collection

To enable students to be tracked over time, information for this study was collected at three different points:

- Phase 1: as students entered the programmes at the start of 2002;
- Phase 2: as most students left the programmes at the end of 2002; and
- Phase 3: approximately one year after most of the young people had left school in mid-2004.

Phase 1

The first *Innovative Pathways from School* report (Boyd et al., 2002) summarises the findings from phase 1 of this study. The focus of phase 1 was on gathering descriptive information about the programmes, as well as information from a sample of students who could then be followed through the programmes. In phase 1, each school was visited for two to three days by members of the research team to:

- conduct individual face-to-face semistructured interviews with the programme leader, and the lead subject teacher of each of the sampled courses to provide information about the design of the programmes and the potential impact of the programmes on students' achievements, skills, attitudes, and access to careers and transition support;
- conduct individual face-to-face structured interviews with a sample of students in each programme, about their reasons for choosing their course, their sources of careers and transition support, and their educational and career aspirations and plans. As part of the interview, students also answered questions about their attitudes towards school and their achievement prior to starting their current programme, and completed an attitude scale of 31 items on views about school and learning. Most of the items in this scale were taken from the *Competent Children at 12 study* (Wylie, 2001), and the *Quality of School Life Questionnaire* developed by Ainley, Reed, and Miller (1986) and adapted by Marks (1998) for the *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth* (LSAY);
- collect information on the students' qualifications and attendance prior to their entry to the programmes; and
- collect school documents relating to the programmes, such as information pamphlets or reports.

At a later date, we conducted individual structured telephone interviews, with representatives from a sample of the non-school providers who assisted in the delivery of the programmes. These interviews were similar to the programme leader interviews.

We also conducted individual structured telephone interviews with the students' parents or caregivers. These interviews were similar to the student interviews, and focused on:

- parents' perceptions of their child's attitudes to secondary school;
- the assistance that parents gave their child with respect to subject choice and career decisions; and
- their child's educational and career aspirations.

Those parents who did not have access to a telephone, or who we could not contact, were sent an interview schedule by post.

In phase 1 we interviewed 119 students. Sixty-three (53 percent) were male and 56 (47 percent) were female. The largest group of students (43: 36 percent) identified as Māori, and the next largest group as Pasifika (37: 31 percent). Approximately one-quarter of the students were Pākehā (26: 22 percent). A few identified as Asian (4: 3 percent) or as more than one ethnicity (9: 8 percent). The majority were in Year 12 (50: 42 percent) or Year 13 (67: 56 percent). Two were in Year 14.[10]

We also formally interviewed 24 school staff, 18 external providers, and 56 parents or caregivers. Parental response rates varied substantially between schools.

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[10] These two students were in their second Year 13 year.

In all phases of this study students and parents were offered a $10 music or book voucher as an acknowledgement of their contribution to the research.

Phase 2

We returned to the schools at the end of 2002—the time when most of the students in the study were preparing to leave school. The focus of phase 2 was on collecting information about the impact of the programmes on students' achievements, skills, attitudes, and access to careers and transition support. Each school was visited for one to three days by members of the research team to:

- conduct individual face-to-face structured interviews with the students, the programme leader, and the lead subject teacher of each of the courses. We also informally talked to careers staff;
- collect information on students' qualifications and attendance during 2002;
- collect information on programme retention rates; and
- collect other school data relating to the programmes, such as sources of funding.

In phase 2 we re-interviewed 23 school staff. This interview included sections on outcomes for students, as well as questions on the transition assistance provided to students during 2002 and the relationship building that occurred between students and teachers. A copy of the phase 2 programme leader or teacher interview is contained in Appendix A.

The focus of the second student interview was to collect information on:

- what students gained from the programmes;
- students' attitudes towards secondary school;
- students' perceptions of how prepared they were to leave secondary school;
- students' educational and career aspirations and plans, and how they thought their programme of study had helped to develop these; and
- students' sources of careers and transition support.

As part of the interview, students who were still at school repeated the attitude scale completed in the phase 1 interview. A copy of the phase 2 student interview is contained in Appendix B.

At a later date, we conducted individual structured telephone interviews with the young people who had left school. Along with similar questions to those asked of students who were still at school, we asked these young people about their:

- reasons for leaving school;
- work and study activities since leaving school; and
- thoughts about the usefulness of the careers and transition support they were provided with at school.

At the end of 2002, we were able to interview 97 (82 percent) of the initial 119 students who participated in the study; that is, 74 of the 75 students who were still at school, and 23 of the 44

students who had left school. Students who did not have access to a telephone, who we were unable to reach after a number of calls, or who we were unable to track, were mailed an interview schedule.

Of the 97 students we interviewed, the majority identified as Māori (33: 34 percent), Pasifika (31: 32 percent), or Pākehā (23: 24 percent). A few identified as Asian (3: 3 percent) or as more than one ethnicity (7: 7 percent). Approximately half were male (50: 52 percent) and half were female (47: 48 percent).

At a later date, we also conducted individual structured telephone interviews with 44 of the young peoples' parents or caregivers about the child's year at school and the careers and transition support provided by family members. Most (35: 80 percent) were parents of students who were still at school at the end of 2002. Some (9: 20 percent) were parents of young people who had left school during the year. A copy of the phase 2 parent interview is contained in Appendix C.

Collecting phase 2 qualification and attendance data

The 2002 school year was a difficult time to be conducting research in schools as teacher strikes and the introduction of NCEA caused major disruptions. Changes to the way schools were presenting assessment data to NZQA as a result of the implementation of NCEA resulted in some challenges in collecting student outcome data. At the end of 2001 we obtained students' prior qualification data from school records. In early 2003 some of the schools in this study opted to take students' qualification data for 2002 from the NZQA website. Although some students and teachers reported that students had completed a number of unit standards at school, this was not evident in their NZQA records as students had not always paid the NZQA "hook on" fee, and a number had withdrawn.

It was not clear to us, or some of the teachers collecting the data, how accurate this data was given that it was still being updated in the middle of 2003. In some cases, when we received both school and NZQA records, they differed. This resulted in it being difficult for us to get an accurate picture of exactly what qualifications students gained from their courses. As a result we have excluded some students from our comparisons, which resulted in a few gaps in our data. Therefore our analyses should be read with some caution.

We collected comparable attendance data for 2001 and 2002 from four of the schools. For a number of reasons we were not able to collect comparable data from three of the schools. For example, at one of the schools the data were removed from the computer system after a certain period of time. An analysis of the data for 2002 we were able to collect and use is included in this report in Chapter 5.

Phase 3

In mid-2004, approximately one year after most of the young people had left school, we contacted them again for a follow-up telephone interview. During this interview they were asked about their work and study activities after leaving school, their plans for the future, and their reflections on their 2002 school programme and the careers and transition support that was provided to them. A copy of the phase 3 young person's interview is contained in Appendix D.

In total we were able to interview 62 (52 percent) of the initial 119 young people who participated in the study. Most (48: 77 percent) had stayed at school until the end of 2002, and one had not yet left school. The other 14 (23 percent) left school during 2002. In this report we discuss the data from those who had left school at some point; that is, 61 young people.

Of these 61 young people, the majority identified as Pasifika (20: 33 percent), Māori (17: 28 percent), or Pākehā (16: 26 percent). A few identified as Asian (2: 3 percent) or as more than one ethnicity (6: 10 percent). Slightly more than half were female (34: 56 percent) and less than half, male (27: 44 percent). There were no significant differences between the profile of the phase 2 and 3 sample in regard to gender or ethnicity.

The response rate of 52 percent was lower than we would have hoped. For a number of reasons we found it difficult to contact some of the young people. A small number did not want to continue to be part of the study. Some were overseas and not able to be located. Others, along with the family members or friends for whom we had contact details, were highly mobile and difficult to track. Some family members or friends were reluctant to provide contact details to a stranger. The young people who did not have access to a telephone, or who we were unable to reach after a number of calls, were sent an interview schedule by post.

Ethics

To ensure that the students, parents, teachers, and external providers were fully informed about the study, at the start of 2002 we gave all participants background information about the study and a consent form. When conducting follow-up interviews participants were given a brief overview of the study, informed about their rights as participants, and asked for their consent to participate.

The students and parents in this study came from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The research team was organised to ensure that whenever possible the Māori researchers interviewed the students and teachers from the schools with high Māori enrolment. If parents expressed difficulty with English or preferred to be interviewed in Tongan or Samoan, a fluent Tongan or Samoan speaker conducted the interview.

To ensure that the information we included in this report about each programme was accurate and fairly represented the perspectives of school staff, we provided descriptions of each programme

and its outcomes to the school staff who were formally interviewed. These descriptions and data were then combined into a thematic analysis across schools.

Data analysis

We examined the phase 2 school staff interviews to identify common themes and differences within and between school programmes. To enable similarities and differences to be identified in the experiences of the young people, the information from phase 2 student and parent interviews, and the phase 3 student interviews, was coded and entered into SAS datasets. To examine students' experiences during 2002 we used the data from the 97 young people and the 44 parents who we were able to interview at both the start and end of the 2002 year. In some cases the experiences of the 74 young people who stayed at school for the full 2002 year are separated from the 23 who left school during 2002 to highlight differences between these groups. In other cases where patterns were similar the data from these two groups are combined.

In 2004 the student data set was reduced to 61 young people making it more difficult to do valid comparisons between those who left school during 2002 and those who stayed for the full year. Given this, the experiences of these two groups have mostly been reported together.

We compared student data between schools, and between characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, level of qualification, perception of preparedness to leave school, and completion of the 2002 school year. We used chi-square statistics from contingency tables to test for significance. Where statistical differences were found this is indicated in the text with phrases such as "were less likely to", "were more likely to", and "were different from". A number of other techniques were used to analyse the data. For example, a factor analysis was used to cluster items on the attitude scale and a correlation analysis was used to ascertain associations between attendance patterns and attitudes to school. These techniques are referred to in the body of this report.

Research team

The core NZCER research team for this project comprised Sally Boyd, Sue McDowall, and Garrick Cooper (Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Ranginui). In addition, Rachel Bolstad wrote some of the phase 2 school case studies, Lia Mapa conducted some parent interviews in Tongan, and Roberta Tiatia in Samoan. Kim Lau, Jordon Waiti, and Ben Gardiner also interviewed some of the young people or parents. Hilary Ferral, Edith Hodgen, and Leonid Grebennikov organised and analysed the data.

Advisory committee

This project was assisted by a virtual advisory committee consisting of representatives from the Post Primary Teachers' Association, the Ministry of Education, Career Services rapuara, the Ministry of Youth Development, the careers and transition service of a Wellington secondary school, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Along with NZCER researchers, members of the committee reviewed the proposal, instruments, and reports stemming from this project.

Format of this report

This report starts with an introductory chapter on the seven school programmes. Chapter 3 summarises the young people's reflections on what prepared them for life outside school and Chapter 4 describes their post-school activities. The seven key aspects of the relationship, information, and experiences web that supported the young people in their retention and transition from school are outlined in Chapters 5–11. The report concludes with a summary of the main themes from this study and a discussion of some of the tensions between young people's experience of transition and the policies and programmes that are designed to support this transition.

2. Introducing the seven schools and their programmes

Introduction

Each of the seven schools in this study developed transition programmes tailored to the needs of their students. Table 1 shows the key features of each programme. Descriptive details about each programme are provided in the section that follows. Further background about the communities the schools' served and the philosophies underpinning these programmes and their content can be found in the phase 1 report (Boyd et al., 2002).

Table 1 **Summary of the programme characteristics**

School and programme name	Nature	Content	Main qualifications gained	Main focus	Main source of funding	Main providers of qualifications	Student organisation in class groups	Work experience	Pathway supported and links to tertiary study
Linwood College: Advanced Studies Academies	1 year Full-time Years 12/13	7 main areas and core modules	Unit standards, NCES*, and other National Certificates	National Certificates, work readiness, and connections to apprenticeships	Youth Training, some operations	Mostly school	Most of the time	Varies; maximum 1 day a week and block placements	Mostly work and apprentice
Aranui High School: Academy programme	1 year Full-time Year 13	12 main areas and choice of core modules or mainstream	Mostly unit standards in some areas along with sports-related awards	Personal skills and work readiness	Operations, some STAR	Mostly school (One course with CPIT)	At least half of the time	Varies; some block placements, some in-house	Mostly work, some links to tertiary
Tongariro High School: World of Work and Outdoor Education and Tourism Studies	2 years Full-time Years 12/13	2 courses: one was focused on a main area and the other offered choices and core modules or mainstream	Unit standards, locally developed outdoor recreation certificate, and possibly NCES*	Work readiness, personal skills, and qualifications	Operations and STAR	School with PTEs and workplace	Most of the time	Up to 2 days a week	Work and tertiary, some links to apprentice
Western Heights High School: Institute of Studies	2 years Mostly full-time Years 12/13	Choice of 15 areas and core modules	Unit standards, a range of other qualifications, and possibly NCES*	Work readiness, personal skills, and qualifications	Operations, some STAR and iwi	PTEs and polytechnics with school	Most of the time	PTE courses provide off-site experience	Mostly work, some links to tertiary and apprentice
Aorere College: Tertiary Pathways	2 years Full-time Years 12/13	3 main areas and core modules	MIT short course certificate and possibly NCES*	Qualifications linking to tertiary and connections to apprenticeships	Operations, some STAR	School with polytechnics	Nearly all of the time	Mostly in-house, minimum 1 day a year	Mostly tertiary and apprentice
James Cook High School: Senior Integrated Studies	2 years Mostly full-time Years 12/13	9 main areas, choice of core modules or mainstream	Unit standards, ASDAN**, and possibly NCES*	Tertiary links and work readiness	Operations and STAR	School with workplace	Most of the time	Varies; maximum 1 day a week	Mostly tertiary and work
Auckland Girls' Grammar School: Gateway (in Year 13)	2 year full-time National Certificate programme with Gateway in Year 13	4 main areas and core modules	Up to 4 National Certificates including NCES*	National Certificates and pathway to tertiary study	Gateway, some operations and STAR	School with workplace	At least half of the time	8 days in each term	Mostly tertiary

* NCES (National Certificate in Employment Skills)

** ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)

The seven schools

The Advanced Studies Academies at Linwood College

The Advanced Studies Academies were set up at Linwood College to "bridge the gap between school and the workplace". The academies aimed to provide a pathway from school to training or work for students who were at-risk of leaving school early, lacked the qualifications needed to get into the industry of their choice, or were unlikely to continue on to tertiary education. In 2002, Linwood College offered seven one-year, full-time Advanced Studies programmes:

- the Services Academy (preparing trainees for work in the services or armed forces);
- the Linwood Urban Music Academy (LUMA);
- the Engineering (pre-apprenticeship) programme;
- the Art Academy;
- the National Certificate in Tourism and Travel;
- the Diploma in Information Processing; and
- the Language and Mathematics programme.

In order to participate in the Advanced Studies programmes, students from Linwood College (and students who transferred from other schools), who would have been entering Year 12 or Year 13, officially left school and were deemed to be adult students or youth trainees. In 2002 most of the trainees were funded through the Youth Training or Training Opportunities programme administered by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Some trainees with higher qualifications who did not fit the TEC criteria were funded from the school's operations grant.

Trainees and staff from the Services Academy, LUMA, and the Engineering programme participated in this study.

The organisation of the Advanced Studies programmes varied according to the content area. Trainees in the Engineering programme and the Services Academy stayed together as class groups, and spent approximately half to three-quarters of their time with the course tutors or directors on specific training related to their main subject. The rest of their time was spent with subject teachers on core areas related to National Certificates, such as English, mathematics, and computer skills. Engineering trainees spent one day a week at work placements. Engineering and Services trainees also completed block work experience placements.

The aim of the LUMA programme was to develop trainees' skills so that they could work in the music industry or continue on to further training. Trainees spent their time working together on two main areas: music technology and event management. The programme also included a couple of hours a week of computer skills training. Trainees did work experience both at school (for example DJing for school events) and outside school (for example acting as roadies or technicians for local concerts).

The Academy programme at Aranui High School

The Academy programme was developed to address the needs of a growing number of students who were failing in the mainstream education system and leaving school without jobs or plans for further training. Twelve academies were developed which aimed to keep these students at school by providing content areas, such as sports, that related to their interests. These content areas were then used as a vehicle to support students to develop work-readiness skills and attitudes. In 2002, the school offered academy programmes in basketball, carving, early childhood care, hospitality and tourism, music, sports development, outdoor adventure, theatre and media, rugby football, trades, photography, and Amorangi o ngā Hāhi Karaitiana (Christian leadership training).

Staff and students from three academies were included in this study: the Sports Development, Rugby, and Trades Academies. In 2002, these one-year programmes were offered to Year 13 and a few Year 12 students.

Students spent 12 hours a week in one of the academy programmes, and 12 hours a week taking either mainstream school subjects or the alternative Academy Module programme. The academy modules were designed for students who were unlikely to succeed in mainstream school subjects and covered areas such as communication English, life/employment skills, and mathematics and computing. Some academies had substantial amounts of off-site work experience built into their programme. Others offered on-site work experience such as coaching junior students.

The World of Work and Outdoor Education and Tourism programmes at Tongariro High School

The World of Work (WoW) and Outdoor Education and Tourism (ORT) programmes were developed to offer increased experiential learning opportunities for senior students who were not succeeding in the mainstream. These two Year 12 or Year 13 courses were offered as alternatives to Bursary. The primary aims of these programmes were to generate a more positive attitude to learning, to encourage senior retention, and to support students to acquire qualifications, practical skills, and future employment.

The part-time WoW programme was run by the school careers and transition teacher. Students in this programme were able to study other school subjects. In 2002, WoW students attended work placements for two days a week in areas they selected. The programme also contained a series of core courses. All students did compulsory mathematics, English, and life skills classes that were assessed by unit standards. The life skills class included unit standards on driver education, first aid, and work experience. In addition, students were able to complete block courses; for example, in 2002 students attended a KiwiHost course and a unit standards-based farming course offered by a local PTE.

The full-time ORT course was run by a school teacher in conjunction with the Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre (OPC) and other providers such as the Department of Conservation and Ruapehu

Alpine Lifts. Students could gain an Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Certificate developed by the Tongariro Consortium. As part of their course students did work experience in local industries.

The Institute of Studies at Western Heights High School

The Institute of Studies was developed to provide alternatives for students who were not succeeding in the mainstream system. In the past, Western Heights High School experienced problems with absenteeism and students leaving school with no qualifications. One aim of the institute was to help students gain more qualifications by providing courses that were practical, achievable, and relevant to students' career interests. Another aim was to support students' development of social skills and self-confidence. Other emphases were to enable students to trial a range of experiences and make real connections to the workforce or the world of tertiary study at local polytechnics and PTEs.

The Institute of Studies programme was a two-year, full-time course for Years 12 and 13 students, although most students stayed for one year. In 2002 about 20 percent of Years 12–14 students were in the institute. All institute students took core modules related to the National Certificate in Employment Skills that were provided by institute teachers. In 2002, the core component consisted of communication English, keyboarding, work and study skills, mathematics, health and safety, legal studies, and an optional physical education course.

In addition, students selected four optional modules each year related to interests they wished to explore further. In 2002, students could choose from automotive engineering, beauty care, building construction, commercial cookery, childcare, fashion and design, forestry, hairdressing, horticulture, maritime skills, motorbody trades, outdoor adventures, restaurant service, retail and wholesale, scuba diving, and farming. Each module ran for six months. To provide these courses the school had developed relationships with a number of providers including Waiariki Institute of Technology, a number of other polytechnics, local PTEs, and a local iwi trust.

Students and staff from the outdoor adventures, hairdressing, and maritime skills courses were included in this study.

The Tertiary Pathways programme at Aorere College

One of the primary reasons for the development of the Tertiary Pathways programme at Aorere College was a realisation by staff that the needs of senior students were not being adequately met. Staff recognised that only a few students went to university, yet most of the courses offered at the senior level were Bursary-related. Teachers also recognised that students were not being encouraged to go to polytechnic. Accordingly, the initial aims of the Tertiary Pathways programme were to keep students who were not succeeding in the mainstream system at school by

providing a pathway to polytechnic, and to enable students to obtain tertiary qualifications at school, and therefore pay lower fees for their tertiary study. Tertiary Pathways was part of the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) curriculum alignment programme. Accordingly, some of the course qualifications were developed in conjunction with MIT.

In 2002, Aorere College ran three Tertiary Pathways programmes: materials technology, hospitality and catering, and sport and recreation. The programmes were offered to Years 12 and 13 students and were for two years in duration (although most students started the programmes in Year 13 and completed one year). Students in the three programmes stayed together as a class group and spent about half of their time completing unit standards and study in their main subject area, and the other half of their time completing core unit standards in English, mathematics, and computing, as well as attending an independent living course. To make the core unit standards more relevant to students the work students were required to do was, if possible, related to the content of each main subject area.

The Senior Integrated programme at James Cook High School

The Senior Integrated programme at James Cook High School was initiated in the early 1990s as an alternative to Bursary to cater for the changing needs of James Cook High School students. It had grown to the point that in 2002, approximately two-thirds of Years 12 and 13 students were involved. The school attempted to offer a wide range of programmes to accommodate the range of strengths and interests students had outside of traditional subjects. Through the Senior Integrated programme the school also aimed to provide students with practical and relevant learning opportunities in areas that were outside their own familial experiences. The Senior Integrated programme was underpinned by a strong sense of whānau.

In 2002 there were nine courses in the Senior Integrated programme: automotive engineering technology, carpentry, creative design, office technology, performing arts, recreation and sport, tourism and hospitality, te pūtake, and transition. These courses were generally two years in length and full-time. All of the programmes had core mathematics and English components, and most had computing and life skills components. In 2003 and 2004 the school was planning a review of these courses.

Three of the Senior Integrated programmes were included in this study: transition, automotive engineering technology, and te pūtake. The students from each of the programmes stayed together for all their subjects except mathematics and English.

The Gateway programme at Auckland Girls' Grammar School

The National Certificate programme, into which the Gateway programme had recently been incorporated, was set up at Auckland Girls' Grammar School in 1994 to address the needs of

students for whom the current senior school curriculum was not considered appropriate. There was concern about the low achievement levels of some students, the lack of an appropriate programme for them, and the number leaving school without qualifications.

The Years 12–13 National Certificate programme offered students the opportunity to specialise in four areas in which they could gain National Certificates: tourism and travel, hospitality, business administration, and computing. Students were also able to gain the National Certificate in Employment Skills. In addition to the four specialist areas, all students did classes in business mathematics, service sector, and communications, within which they completed core generic unit standards that contributed to the National Certificate in Employment Skills.

The school began a two-year pilot of Gateway in 2001. Gateway is a TEC initiative that aims to strengthen the range of career pathways available to students by providing both school-based and workplace learning and a point of entry into apprenticeships. The school's perspective was different from TEC's, and school staff saw the primary goal of the National Certificate Gateway (NCG) programme to be to support students to leave school with a qualification that enabled them to go on to tertiary study prior to their entry to the workforce. As part of Gateway, students completed 8-day block work placements each term in their area of interest.

Students and staff from the tourism and travel and business administration courses were included in this study.

3. Feeling prepared for life outside school

Introduction

In this chapter we set the scene for the main body of this report by exploring the question: Which aspects of the young people's school experiences contributed most to their retention at school and their transition decisions and experiences? We examine this question in two ways: the first is by presenting the stories of three of the young people in this study. These stories touch on many of the themes explored in later chapters. Secondly, we use data from all of the young people to provide an overview of the key factors that prepared these young people for their transition from school.

Stories about leaving school

The following stories of three of the young people highlight the individual nature of their post-school journeys and the different experiences their decisions around career and study options were based on. They also alert the reader to commonalities as well as differences in the experiences of these young people.

Pele's story

Pele's story is of a young man who was supported by his school teachers to follow his interests and start on a traditional pathway towards a career in trades. The main theme explored in this story is the role that school staff, and in particular subject teachers, can have in assisting young people to explore their options and to make connections with employers and the tertiary environment. It also shows the importance of engaging students with study by offering courses that are practical and have clear connections with young people's interests.

Pele: A Year 13 Pasifika student who studied a unit standards-based technology course

Views and experiences of school

Prior to 2002 before he started the programme in this study, Pele described how he had been getting into "trouble" outside school, and although he gained three School Certificate passes and finished the Sixth Form, he didn't think he had done very well at school and didn't feel particularly focused. One of the reasons for this was that prior to 2002, school didn't offer options that he was interested in:

> I struggled through the Sixth Form … I was really lost. I couldn't keep up with the work as I didn't really like the subjects. (Start 2002)

This contributed to him feeling "not very well" prepared for life outside school:

> They never probably prepared us. They just taught subjects, not about getting a job. (Start 2002)

In 2002 his views about school changed and he had started to enjoy his technology course as he perceived it to be easier, practical, and more relevant to his plans. During 2002 he gained a total of 31 unit standard credits:

> It was more practical work 'cause last year was the Sixth Form year and you had to sit through subjects you didn't want to do. This year was all set up for practical work. It was all based around engineering. You got all your subjects last year but you did not know what it was for, why you were taking them, not like this year. (End 2002)

Experiences and plans in 2002

When we interviewed Pele at the start of 2002 he had already developed a clear set of career plans. When he finished school he intended to get an apprenticeship and then do a course to be a diesel mechanic. He had a second plan to be a bartender. In mid-2002 a firm contacted the school looking for apprentices and his teacher had set up an interview for him. He left school for an apprenticeship with this firm but stated that, if this opportunity had not come up, he would have stayed at school. When we talked to him at the end of 2002 he was planning to continue with his job and do a Diploma in Engineering at AUT or AIT with a view to becoming an engineer.

Activities and plans post-2002

In 2004 Pele was still completing his apprenticeship, and as part of his training package had started studying part-time at MIT (the tertiary institute his school had developed a close relationship with). He planned to continue with his job and do a level 5 certificate and then an engineering degree. He could see that he was moving in a direction that suited him:

> [Things are going] really good. I'm going forward—I'm going to get a qualification without paying fees. I get paid. You get advanced training for your deal. I don't want to get a loan … It's easier to learn from the older guys with 30 to 50 years' experience. (2004)

Careers and transition support provided at school

In retrospect, Pele considered that school had prepared him "quite well" for life outside school. He thought that his school course, and the support he got from his teacher, was instrumental in "sorting him out":

> Tertiary Pathways was a turning point [towards a job]. I wasn't really wanting to go to jail, it kept me outta jail. The teachers were really good, they kept on pushing me forward. (2004)

He described how he'd had a lot of support from school that assisted him to make decisions about the future and commented that members of his family did not have the knowledge or connections to assist him in this way. In particular he talked about how his teacher, by setting up a job interview for him, by assisting him to make a connection with Apprentice Training NZ, through the apprenticeship day run at school, and through the information and support he provided had helped him find an apprenticeship and study options that suited his interests and financial situation:

> [My subject teacher gave me] heaps ... [He told me] the courses that Tertiary Pathways could line you into … different courses and apprenticeships. He brought in past students to talk about the options they are taking, and employers, and we visited MIT. …People rang him [the teacher] and he would suggest some students and they would come and see you and talk and they would come back to us if they liked what they saw. [It was] a chat, not a formal job interview. (End 2002)

He valued the practical engineering skills he had learnt at school, and the way his teacher supported him to get a job by being realistic about his skills and capabilities when they were discussing his options. He also appreciated the information he got from careers staff:

> [From the careers teachers I got] brochures that told you about new stuff that was going on—job experience, courses, apprenticeships, jobs... (End 2002)

What could have been different?

When asked if there was any additional careers and transition support school could have offered, Pele suggested he could have been provided with more information about post-school options. He also considered that learning more science and mathematics at school in the context of engineering could have benefited him.

Huia's story

Huia's story highlights the impact gaining qualifications can have on young people who have not experienced this type of success in the past. In Huia's case, gaining National Certificates at school increased her confidence and provided a clear pathway to tertiary study. The relationships her school had developed with local tertiary providers and liaison officers supported Huia to make the step to tertiary study, as did the mentoring a subject teacher offered. Like Pele, Huia made use of the range of different types of careers and transition support her school offered and used the skills and expertise of both careers staff and subject teachers. This story also shows the effect carefully

selected work experience placements can have on young people's confidence, skills, and subsequent career experiences.

Huia: A Māori student who did Gateway in Year 13 as part of a two-year National Certificate course

Plans and activities up to the end of 2002

In 2000 Huia had not passed any School Certificate subjects, and she considered she had been at-risk of getting kicked out of school. In 2001 she started a two-year National Certificate course that included Gateway work placements in the second year. Her attitude to school changed as a result:

> ...Yeah [my attitude changed] big time ... they gave me the prefect role ... people come to me for help...The teaching methods were way better than the Fifth Form, School C was rushed and intense. [In these classes] they planned out the structure better, no clashing of large assessments. If you look at Bursary they're all "normal" [subjects] like English and science—boring! National Certificate is like the fun way, not the stressful way. (End 2002)

At the start of 2002 she had a plan to go to polytechnic and continue getting higher levels of her school qualifications. By the end of 2002 she had gained four National Certificates and had refined her plan to continue with one of these: business. She had decided to go to AUT (a tertiary institute her school had developed a close relationship with) to gain a higher certificate and to use this as a pathway to a degree and a masters with a view to working in management or marketing. At the end of 2002 she gained a scholarship to go to AUT.

Activities and plans post-2002

During 2002 Huia started to work part-time at a firm she had worked at whilst on a Gateway placement. At the end of 2002 she left school for a holiday job at this firm. At the start of 2003 she started a certificate course at AUT but during the year she dropped out because she had been encouraged by a liaison officer to upgrade to a diploma course that she did not enjoy. She then started to work full-time as an accounts clerk at the same firm. When we talked to her in 2004 she was enjoying her work and planning to go back to AUT to finish her course and eventually do a degree in business so that she could become an accountant.

Careers and transition support provided at school

Huia thought that school had prepared her "quite well" for life outside school. One reason for this was the qualifications she had gained:

> 'Cause I got all the qualifications I signed up for!... Succeeding is major for me 'cause I'm not used to it. (End 2002)

Another reason was the careers and transition support and information she had received at school that had given her a pathway to tertiary study, and assisted her to clarify her interests:

> If the National Certificate [programme] wasn't introduced to me I wouldn't be here 'cause there was no way I could get into Sixth Form Certificate or Bursary. This is my only pathway. (End 2002)

Huia described how careers staff had given her information on courses and prerequisites, career options, scholarship information, and introduced her to the Māori liaison officer at AUT. A subject teacher had mentored her and assisted her to unpack this information:

> Mainly it's my teacher—she has really helped me and guided me… She pushed me to succeed. She mostly just gave me encouragement and told me what past students had done and gave me options. She wasn't telling me what to do, she just guided me. (End 2002)

Her work experience placements and core classes had also played a key role in preparing Huia for life outside school. They had increased her self-confidence, given her practical work skills, and helped her discover what she was interested in:

> Work experience pushed me in the right direction with tertiary study and made me decide definitely what I wanted to do… I opened up more and came out of my shell more once I got to know the team I was working with well. (End 2002)

> It was the work experience which helped me to get to where I am now. I'd probably be in Pak 'N Save or Glassons working for $7 an hour otherwise… I just think I've come out sort of on the top. It was me against the world. It worked out to my advantage. (2004)

What could have been different?

Huia did not consider that there was any additional careers and transition support she could have been provided with at school. She would not have changed her school programme if she had the chance again, but regretted dropping out of her university course.

Rachel's story

Rachel's story describes a young person who is in the process of developing her ideas about her interests while making pragmatic decisions about working to earn money. Rachel was less likely to act on her plans than some of the other young people in this study. In part this may have been due to the lesser opportunities she had to gain qualifications at school and the nature of the careers and transition support offered to her, which was less comprehensive than that offered to some of the other young people. Like Pele's and Huia's stories, her story also shows how good student–teacher relationships, and subject content that is relevant to young people, can support their retention at school.

Rachel: A Year 12 Pākehā student who studied a sports course in 2002

Plans and activities up to the end of 2002

At the start of 2002 Rachel rated herself as an average student as she had only passed one School Certificate subject and not "paid attention" at school. School had become less enjoyable since the Third Form as the content was boring and lessons "dragged on". She considered that she was "not very well" prepared for life outside school as she had received no help with careers.

At the start of 2002 she was enjoying the sports course she had just started and had developed a general plan to study computers in the future, but was not sure about what sort of work she was interested in. Over the course of 2002 Rachel's attitude towards school improved. She attributed this to the "family" environment of her course and the content, which she found more relevant to her interests:

> It's just more fun—something to look forward to… It's about fitness—it was my interests… It feels like you're in a better environment. The teachers are better—they treat you like an adult. I was motivated at the start of the year to get some qualifications. (End 2002)

Careers and transition support provided at school during 2002

By the end of 2002 Rachel felt better prepared for life outside school as she was more confident and had gained some qualifications (during 2002 she had gained seven unit standard credits). The coaching she did at a local primary school had given her teamwork and communication skills and her sports course had assisted her to develop her ideas about her future work, and got her interested in physiology. She valued the encouragement her teacher had given her.

At the end of 2002 her mother suggested that she become a beautician, and as a result she considered doing a beautician course at a PTE or being a kindergarten teacher because of her interest in working with people. She went to the school careers department and they provided her with information about beauticians' courses and organised for her to visit local polytechnics.

Activities and plans in mid-2004

Rachel left school at the end of 2002. She started working at McDonalds because she needed money to live. She then changed jobs a number of times to find higher paying jobs. Most of her jobs she got through friends or family friends except for one which she found through a temping agency.

First she did soldering and cutting at an engineering firm. Then she worked at a brush making company. She received a head injury and stopped work to go on an ACC benefit. She was not meant to work but started another job. When we interviewed her in 2004 she was on an ACC benefit again as she had left this job to recover more fully from her head injury.

From physiotherapy as a result of her injury she has become interested in being a physiotherapist. She had developed a plan to do NCEA study related to a physiotherapist qualification and then do a physiotherapist diploma and ultimately a degree. This plan was connected with the experiences she'd had at school that had given her an interest in how bodies work and a desire to work with people. She was finding her recovery period frustrating as she was not able to start her new plan.

What could have been different?

Rachel was not sure if there was any type of extra careers and transition support that could have assisted her as she left school, but wished she had taken more core literacy and numeracy courses as these would have assisted her with her plans.

Young people's perspective on feeling prepared

We now turn to a consideration of the data from the 97 young people in this study whom we interviewed at the start and end of 2002 (that is, 74 who stayed at school for the full 2002 year and 23 who left during the year), and 61 young people re-interviewed in 2004, to provide an overview of the key factors that prepared these young people for their transition from school.

Young people who stayed at school during 2002

By the end of 2002 most of the students who were still at school considered school had prepared them either "very well" or "quite well" for life outside school, as shown in Table 2. Their views showed a significant positive shift from the start of 2002. In 2004, when reflecting on their schooling, the majority continued to choose the top two points of the scale.

Table 2 **Students who stayed at school in 2002: School prepared for life outside school?**

	Very well prepared	Quite well prepared	Well prepared	Not very well prepared	Not at all well prepared
Start 2002 (N=74)	14 (19%)	19 (26%)	21 (28%)	17 (23%)	3 (4%)
End 2002 (N=74)	26 (35%)	32 (43%)	12 (16%)	4 (5%)	-
Mid-2004 (N=47)	13 (28%)	16 (34%)	12 (26%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)

Reasons for feeling prepared

So what aspects of the programmes support this shift? To examine this question, at the end of 2002 and in 2004, we asked the young people how they knew they were prepared for life outside school. At both points in time a similar pattern was evident in their responses except that in 2004 larger proportions emphasised the support of their teachers. In 2004, the most often cited reasons for feeling prepared were:

- the careers and transition information, advice, and support offered by teachers (34 percent);
- opportunities to attend work experience (30 percent);
- gaining passes or qualifications (26 percent);
- opportunities to develop self-confidence and motivation (23 percent);
- opportunities to develop social, communication, or leadership skills (21 percent); and
- opportunities to develop practical job skills (19 percent).

> The service sector and employment skills courses. I've been able to use so much of what they taught me—just being polite and things like that. I don't know if I would have got the job I've got now without those courses. Like when I go into meetings I know how to speak—make eye contact—normal things. I used to shake and say stupid things. (Ex-student 2004)

In both 2002 and 2004 a smaller number mentioned a variety of other aspects of their courses that had assisted them to feel prepared. These included the information they had gained about tertiary courses, the life skills they had gained such as budgeting, and the practical transition skills they had developed such as how to research careers, develop CVs, complete application forms, or behave in job interviews.

In 2004, those who studied at polytechnics or universities were more likely to have felt prepared than those who studied at PTEs or who had not done tertiary study. In particular a number of those who had done pre-apprenticeship programmes were very positive about the way these courses prepared them for their next step, both in terms of the qualifications they gained, and the introduction to the workforce that was organised for them.

Young people who left school during 2002

We also asked the young people who had left school during 2002 how well they thought school had prepared them for life outside school. At the start of 2002 their attitudes were similar to the students who stayed at school. But, unlike their peers, their views did not show the same positive shifts over time. Table 3 shows that at the end of 2002, over one-third considered that they were "not very well" or "not at all well" prepared for life outside school.

Table 3   **Students who left school during 2002: School prepared for life outside school?**

	Very well prepared	Quite well prepared	Well prepared	Not very well prepared	Not at all well prepared	Not sure
	N	N	N	N	N	N
Start 2002 (N=23)	1	8	7	5	2	-
End 2002 (N=23)	4	4	6	5	3	1
Mid-2004 (N=14)	1	4	3	4	1	1

Parents' perspectives on whether school had prepared their child for life outside school

Like their children at the end of 2002, parents rated their child's level of preparedness higher than at the start of 2002. Table 4 shows the views of the 44 parents we interviewed at both the start and end of 2002. Parents of Pasifika students were more likely than other parents to consider their child was "very well" prepared for life outside school.

Table 4 **Parents' views: How well did school prepare your child for life outside school? (N=44)**

	Very well prepared	Quite well prepared	Well prepared	Not very well prepared	Not at all well prepared	Not sure/NA
Start 2002	8 (18%)	7 (16%)	15 (34%)	11 (25%)	1 (2%)	2 (5%)
End 2002 (student still at school)	17 (49%)	12 (34%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	-	2 (6%)
End 2002 (student left school)	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)

At the end of 2002, the main reasons why parents considered their child to be either "very well" or "quite well" prepared were similar to the reasons given by their child. That is, their child had:

- the opportunity to do work experience which had prepared them for work, helped them make choices, or led to work;
- been supported to develop personally in confidence or in social, communication, or leadership skills; and
- the opportunity to discuss their future options with teachers who had helped them to develop careers and transition plans.

Why did some of the young people not feel prepared for life outside school?

At the end of 2002 a small number (4) of the students who were still at school and more (8) of those who had left school stated that they did not feel prepared for life outside school. Similarly in 2004, some (6) of those who stayed at school in 2002 and more (5) of those who left during 2002 commented that they had not felt prepared. Some of these young people said these feelings were related to their lack of enjoyment of, or interest in, school:

> I didn't want to do it… I was into girls, rugby, parties, and cars! (Ex-student 2004)

> Because I was in the Seventh Form three times—going there to muck around. School got sick and tired of me… (Ex-student 2004)

Others thought that they needed to learn how to be motivated and work hard at school but they had not acquired these attributes. Some considered school had not given them enough opportunities to do work experience or gain practical skills, or the qualifications or independent living skills they needed to function outside school:

> [I needed] a lot of practical skills, a lot of machinery work. Maths and English so you know how to use it if you want to make something or try to draw some plans. (Ex-student end 2002)

> How to deal with debt (HP and loans). Financial management isn't taught at school. At school you are taught to have a job … not to be self-employed and have people working for you. (Ex-student 2004)

In hindsight: What could have been different?

In 2004 we asked the young people if they would have done anything differently at school if they were able to repeat their last year. Almost half (27: 44 percent) identified things that would have assisted them to feel more prepared for their current situation. Most commonly mentioned was studying harder or trying harder to get qualifications. Others wished they had done more core classes such as numeracy or literacy or academic subjects as they had found that these courses gave people skills that were useful in the workforce. Some suggested that they would have been better off doing a tertiary course than a school course. Others wished they had selected school courses that better matched their current career interests.

Key messages about being prepared

In the short term for these young people, being "prepared" or "ready" to leave school encompassed not just having qualifications, access to information and advice about careers, and core literacy and numeracy skills, but also having the opportunity to develop increased self-knowledge and social skills, being supported to feel successful, and gaining direct experience and practical skills in their areas of interest, the workplace, or tertiary environments. These young people valued learning experiences that set up these opportunities, and in particular, work experience. Many also stated that the advice their teachers offered and the support and encouragement they gave was instrumental in assisting them with their next step, particularly if they continued to tertiary study or an apprenticeship.

These findings are consistent with a number of other studies. In their study of USA high school juniors, Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, and Finkelberg White (2002) suggest that "readiness" for students occurs on multiple levels which are both "objective" and "psychological". Like the young people in this current study, Phillips et al. (2002) identify work-based learning and supportive adults as the core environmental factors that facilitate student "readiness". Similar findings were noted by Flouri and Buchanan (2002) in a study of the factors which promote career maturity[11] in British adolescents. They found that the young people who had computing skills, work experience, strong job skills, and a career role model tended to score higher on their measures of career maturity.

Further chapters of this report explore how the activities and structure of the programmes in this study, and the behaviours of staff, created a "web" of relationships, information, and experiences around these young people. For many this contributed to their retention at school and to a sense that they were prepared for life outside school. The seven key aspects of the relationship, information, and experiences web which will be explored are:

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[11] Career maturity was defined as having a career plan or the knowledge about how to access information and training.

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- positive attitudes towards school (Chapter 5);
- relationships with teachers (Chapter 6);
- access to careers and transition information, advice, and support (Chapter 7);
- real experiences of the world of work (Chapter 8);
- bridges to the tertiary environment (Chapter 9);
- opportunities to gain qualifications (Chapter 10); and
- opportunities to develop life skills (Chapter 11).

4.   Post-school activities and plans

Introduction

In this chapter we explore what happened to the young people in this study as they left school. Using data from the 97 young people whom we interviewed both at the start and end of 2002 (that is, 74 who stayed at school for the full 2002 year and 23 who left during the year), and 61 young people re-interviewed in 2004, we discuss the young people's study and work plans and post-school activities. Along with Chapter 3, this information sets the scene for some of the themes that will be explored in more depth in later chapters.

Plans and activities after leaving school

In a review of the literature about student tertiary decision making, Leach and Zepke (2005) note that many local and international studies show that young people make their career and study decisions prior to Year 11 or Year 12. This was the case for many of the young people in this study, the majority of whom, when we interviewed them at the start of 2002, had some sort of general plan about what they would do when they left school, as shown in Table 5. But did these young people follow through on their plans? At first glance there is a match between the proportions of those planning to either work or study and those who actually did.

Table 5   **Post-school plans and actual first post-school activity**

Activity	Start of 2002: First main plan on leaving school (N=97)		First main activity on leaving school (N=70*)	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Work	54	56	31	44
Apprenticeship	5	5	5	7
Study	35	36	31	44
Not employed or studying**	-	-	2	3
Travel	1	1	1	1
Not sure	2	2	-	-
TOTAL	**97**	**100**	**70**	**99***

*   This total includes the end of 2002 activities of the 23 young people who left school during 2002, and the 2004 activities of the 47 young people who stayed for the full 2002 year.

**   Brief periods of unemployment and holiday jobs have been excluded.

***   Percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

By mid-2004 when we followed up 61 of the young people[12] about half were working only, mostly in full-time jobs; about one-third were studying full-time or combining study and work; and around one-sixth were not in the paid labour force, as shown in Table 6.

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[12]   Most (42: 69 percent) had left school at the end of 2002. A few (5: 8 percent) had spent some time at school in 2003. The other 14 (23 percent) had left school during 2002.

Table 6   **Activities at the time of being interviewed in 2004**

Type of activity	N	%
Working only	**25**	**41**
Working full-time	23	38
Working part-time only	2	3
Apprenticeships	**6**	**10**
Full-time apprenticeship with part-time study	4	7
Full-time apprenticeship only	2	3
Studying full-time only	**8**	**13**
Combining study and work	**12**	**20**
Studying full-time and working part-time/casual	5	9
Studying part-time and working full-time	5	8
Studying part-time and working part-time	2	3
Not in the paid labour force or studying	**10**	**16**
On a Work and Income/ACC benefit (including one working)	7	11
Not working but not getting benefit	2	3
Looking after whānau members	1	2
TOTAL	**61**	**100**

Those who left school during 2002 were more likely to be working in a full-time job and those who stayed until the end of 2002, to be studying on full- or part-time courses. Those who were studying full-time and not working were mostly Pasifika young people. Most of the 10 young people who were either not in the paid labour force or not studying were those who had stayed at school in 2002. These different patterns reflect the length of time since the young people left school. Those who left in 2002 had more time to finish an initial course and find work.

These data give a deceptively simple picture of the experiences of these young people. In fact only about one-fifth had gone straight to a study or work activity and were still engaged in that activity. Most had two or three major changes in activities, and one had eight changes. Some had worked in a number of different jobs to fund their study, others had swapped courses, and some had done a number of full- or part-time jobs since leaving school. Almost one-third (19: 31 percent) had been unemployed at some stage. Overall, similar proportions of those who left school during 2002 and those who stayed had spent some time unemployed, but those who left school with low qualifications[13] were more likely to have been unemployed.

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[13]   Low qualifications is defined as less than 40 unit standard credits/three School Certificate passes.

Table 7 shows the range of activities the young people had engaged in since leaving school. Reflecting the longer length of time they had outside school, those who left school during 2002 tended to have had more changes in activities. Males were more likely to have worked at some stage or done apprenticeships, and females, full-time study.[14]

Table 7   **Range of activities since leaving school (N=61)**

Type of activity	N	%
Worked	**55**	**90**
Full-time job	39	64
Part-time job	20	33
Apprenticeship	7	12
Casual job	5	8
Working in more than one job at the same time	5	8
Studied	**44**	**72**
Studied full-time only	30	49
Studied full-time and worked	10	16
Studied part-time and worked	10	16
Studied part-time only	1	2
Not in the paid labour force or studying	**19**	**31**
On a Work and Income/ACC benefit	11	18
Not working but not getting a benefit	5	8
Unpaid work experience	3	5
Looking after whānau	2	3
Travelling overseas for extended periods of time	2	3
Following own interests	2	3

In the international literature the individualised nature of transition for today's young people has been contrasted to the set pathways of the past (Bye, 2000; Smith, 1999; Wyn & Dwyer, 1999). The OECD (2000) has used the term "milling and churning" to refer to the increased tendency for young people to spend an extended period of time during which they move between or combine various activities such as full-time work, part-time work, study, unemployment, or other endeavours such as overseas travel.

Milling and churning was evident in the experiences of some of the young people in this study who were engaged in a period of swapping between different options or combining study with a

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[14]   In part this is likely to be a school effect caused by the number of females from Auckland Girls' Grammar who were doing full-time study.

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number of jobs. But others, particularly those doing apprenticeships, seem to be taking the first steps on what may well be a more traditional linear pathway. Taylor (2005) discusses how the current transition rhetoric suggests that young people need to be prepared for a world in which they will have to be flexible, and be prepared for job mobility and constant upskilling. She questions how appropriate these conceptions of the "new worker" are to some young people, particularly those in trades occupations. For the young people in this current study a number of patterns were evident: some were working towards a set career goal in a particular area; some were taking any job they could find; and others were hunting for work in areas that matched their interests.

Study plans and activities

Why is tertiary study important?

Both New Zealand and overseas studies show that young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to go to university (Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Leach & Zepke, 2005). In New Zealand this is the case for many Māori and Pasifika students, many of whom come from low socioeconomic backgrounds and attend low-decile schools. These young people are less likely to do tertiary study at degree or postgraduate level (Anae et al., 2002; Boyd, Chalmers, & Kumekawa, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2004). Māori and Pasifika students who do attend tertiary courses are more likely to study for certificates at polytechnics or PTEs (Anae et al., 2002; Ministry of Education, 2004).

A lack of tertiary participation has consequences for young people. New Zealand statistics show Māori and non-Māori with tertiary qualifications have a higher annual income and lower unemployment rates than those with school qualifications only (Ministry of Education, 2005a). Those with degree or higher qualifications have higher annual incomes than those with lower level tertiary qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2005a).

Study plans and activities

Encouraging students to continue to tertiary study was a key emphasis of many of the programmes in this study and many of the young people realised the importance of tertiary study. At the start of 2002, of the 97 young people we tracked, three-quarters (75: 77 percent) considered they would be doing some form of tertiary study in the future. Most did not have detailed plans. Only a few (14: 14 percent) indicated that they intended to study at one of the local institutions their teachers were planning to make connections with during the 2002 year, and only 12 (12 percent) could describe a specific pathway their school qualifications could lead them to in any detail.

Those who stayed at school in 2002 and those who left school during 2002 tended to have different tertiary study experiences. These are discussed below.

Students who stayed at school in 2002: Study plans and activities

At the start of 2002, of the 74 young people who stayed at school for the full year most (62: 84 percent) had some form of tertiary study plan for the future, and five planned to study for more school qualifications. Most of these plans were very general. As shown in Table 8, over one-third did not name the actual institution or the type of institution they would study at.

Table 8   **Stayed at school during 2002: Planned and actual first study institutions**

First institution	Plans start 2002 (N=74)		Plans end 2002 (N=74)		Actual first study 2003–2004 (N=47)		Future plans 2004 (N=47)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Polytechnic	16	22	22	30	8	17	8	17
University*	10	14	18	24	9	19	11	23
PTE (including Youth Training)	2	3	7	9	11	23	3	6
School/night school	5	7	2	3	2	4	1	2
College of education	-	-	2	3	-	-	2	4
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	-
Other (for example, the army)	5	7	1	1	2	4	2	4
Not sure of plans/institution	29	39	13	18	NA	NA	12	26
No study plans/no study	7	9	9	12	13	28	8	17
TOTAL	**74**	**101****	**74**	**100**	**47**	**99****	**47**	**99****

*   Mostly Auckland University of Technology or a Waikato University bridging course.

**   Percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

By the end of 2002 many had developed more clarity about the details of their study plans. Similar to the start of the year, the majority (63: 85 percent) intended to do some form of tertiary study at some time in the future. By the end of 2002 most could name the actual institution or the type of institution they planned to study at and the area they were likely to study in. Most were interested in, and did study in: tourism/recreation/hospitality, engineering, computing/IT, finance/business, or design/practical arts. At the end of 2002 around one-third of those with study plans had more than one area they were going to choose from or more than one plan.

The pattern noted by Fergusson and Woodward (2000) and Leach and Zepke (2005) for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds being less likely to go to university would have been evident in the plans and activities of these young people except that a number attended Auckland University of Technology, an institution that changed its status from a polytechnic to a university.

The first type of qualification these young people planned to study for, and the qualifications they had gained or were working towards by mid-2004, are shown in Table 9.

Table 9   **Stayed at school during 2002: Planned and actual qualifications**

Qualification	First plan end of 2002 (N=74)		Qualifications gained or studied 2003–2004 (N=47)		Future plan in 2004 (N=47)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Certificate	19	26	20	43	5	11
Unit standard credits	-	-	7	15	-	-
Diploma	5	7	5	11	6	13
Degree	5	7	2	4	10	21
NCEA credits	-	-	2	4	-	-
Other	4	5	4	9	2	4
Not sure of qualification	32	43	4	9	16	34
No study plans/no study	9	12	13	28	8	17
TOTAL	**74**	**100**	**57***	**NA**	**47**	**100**

* This number includes those who had finished one qualification and had started study for another.

At the start of 2002 almost half were not sure of the type of qualification they would study for. By 2004 the most common qualification studied for was a certificate. Some young people had developed plans to study for higher qualifications, and some had started to act on these plans.

Study plans and activities of those who left school during 2002

Table 10 shows the institutions the young people who left school during 2002 planned to study at and their activities. Their plans tended to be less firm than their counterparts who stayed at school. Correspondingly, by 2004 a smaller proportion had started tertiary study.

Table 10 **Left school during 2002: Planned and actual post-school study institutions**

First institution	Study plans start 2002 (N=23) N	Actual first study end 2002 (N=23) N	Study plans end 2002 (N=23) N	Study plans 2004 (N=14) N
Polytechnic	12	3	13	5
University	1	-	1	-
PTE (including Youth Training)	-	6	3	-
School/night school	2	-	-	-
Not sure of plans/institution	7	-	-	6
No study plans/no study	1	14	6	3
TOTAL	**23**	**23**	**23**	**14**

The actual and planned qualifications of those who left school during 2002 are show in Table 11.

Table 11 **Left school during 2002: Planned and actual qualifications**

Qualification	Gained or studying for by end 2002 (N=23) N	Future plans end 2002 (N=23) N	Future plans 2004 (N=14) N
Certificate	4	5	4
Diploma	-	2	2
Degree	-	-	1
Not sure	5	10	4
No study plans/no study	14	6	3
TOTAL	**23**	**23**	**14**

Patterns in tertiary study activities by 2004

By 2004 over two-thirds (42: 69 percent) of the 61 young people we interviewed had started some form of tertiary study since leaving school and a few had returned to school or night school. Those who had more qualifications[15] tended to study at polytechnics or universities, and those with fewer qualifications, at PTEs. Accordingly, none of those who left school during 2002 had studied at a university.

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[15] That is, 40 or more unit standard credits, three or more School Certificate passes, or a National Certificate.

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Many of those who stayed at school until the end of 2002 were still studying in 2004. Some (12) had studied on two courses and a couple, three courses. Four had left courses or swapped courses partway through. There were gender and school differences in these young people's plans and activities. Females were more likely to have studied at PTEs or universities, and males at polytechnics.[16] Groups of young people from some schools studied at one or two preferred providers.

One-third (16) of those who had studied had attended courses, such as Youth Training at PTEs, that they did not have to pay for. Seven, all but one of whom were Māori, had gained a scholarship or an extra grant to assist their study.

The match between tertiary plans and activities

A closer look at the match between these young people's planned and actual activities revealed a substantial amount of change between the end of 2002 and mid-2004. In total, of the 42 who had studied since they left school, only 18 (43 percent) had done so at the type of institution they had planned to, mostly polytechnics or universities. A similar trend for young New Zealanders to change the tertiary study plans they developed at school is noted by Boyd et al. (2001), and in the Career Services destinations and tracking pilot study (BCR Marketing and Social Research, 2003).

Tables 8 and 10 show that the largest number planned to study at polytechnics, but the most common first institution studied at was a PTE. Some of the young people had changed their plans, and nine of those who planned to study at a polytechnic, university, or college of education in fact studied at a PTE. A number (13) did not carry out the plans they made in 2002—these young people tended to be those who left school during 2002. A few (6) had since developed and carried out plans to study. These young people mostly studied at PTEs and polytechnics.

A general trend is observable in this data with those who developed more clarity about their tertiary plans while still at school tending to follow through with some form of tertiary study. Some of those who had firmed their tertiary plans at school still intended to action them some time in the future. In contrast, those who had not developed detailed plans at school, tended not to have studied by mid-2004.

Study plans for the future

By 2004 the young people had increased the value they placed on tertiary study. Overall, only two had not yet done some form of tertiary study or workplace training or were not planning to study at some point. Most had either firm plans (27: 44 percent) or general plans (23: 38 percent) to do

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16 These differences were mostly caused by many of the girls from Auckland Girls' Grammar studying at AUT.

some form of study in the future. As shown in Tables 9 and 11 many were planning to work up to higher-level qualifications at universities and polytechnics. The main areas of study the young people were interested in were in tourism/recreation/hospitality, finance/business, or engineering. A few were planning to study further school qualifications or to do more workplace training. Reflecting their different initial study choices, females were more likely to plan to study for a diploma or degree at university and males for a higher-level certificate at polytechnics. Those who studied at PTEs tended not to have future study plans or have a general plan to do more study but were not sure where.

A small number had plans to swap from their current course to another as they found their first course was not meeting their needs. One or two had plans to study in a range of areas to give themselves a variety of options. Māori and Pasifika young people were more likely than the other young people to be planning to study for a degree.

Level of knowledge about tertiary plans

As Tables 8–11 show, at the end of 2002 some of those who had study plans, including those who stated their plans were firm, could not name the institution they would attend, and many were not sure of the qualifications they would be gaining. In 2004 some of the young people also had difficulty naming the qualifications they were currently working towards or had gained. This pattern was more evident for those studying at PTEs, suggesting that they were not fully informed about the nature of their course, and could be less likely to know if their qualification could lead to higher qualifications in the future. This raises questions about the quality of support provided on some tertiary courses, and indicates a need for young people to be better informed about where their school qualifications can lead them and the range of qualifications possible in the tertiary environment.

Finding work

All but six of the young people had done some form of paid work since leaving school. For the 44 who were working in 2004, their jobs were mostly in three areas: trades, service/sales/armed forces, and clerical.[17] More females were working in service/sales/armed forces and clerical jobs, and males in trades. Work was very important to most of these young people, and those who were not employed or had just found work talked about how they did not want to be a "bludger" or a "bum":

> I could be a bum, but I don't want to do that. I want a full-time job. (Ex-student 2004)

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[17] Occupations were categorised using the *New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1999* (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).

Work plans for the future in 2004

In 2004 about half of those who stayed at school in 2002 (26: 55 percent) and most (11: 79 percent) of those who left during 2002 had firm plans to either continue with their current job or had an idea of the job or jobs they were working towards. Reflecting their different initial job and study choices, the main future focus for the females was work in professional, associated professional, or services/sales/armed forces jobs and males, in trades. Over one-third (22: 36 percent) had more than one main work area they were interested in.

One-quarter (12: 26 percent) of those who stayed at school had more general work plans and a number (9: 19 percent) were unsure of their plans. In contrast, only three of those who left school during 2002 did not have some form of definite plan. This reflects the different situations these two groups of young people were in. More of those who stayed at school in 2002 were studying in 2004, whereas most of those who left school during 2002 were working. These young people had had more time to find work and experiment with different jobs.

Reflecting on the past and looking to the future

Being optimistic about the new environment outside school

When asked about how they felt about their situation since leaving school, all but one of the young people talked about some of the positive aspects of their lives. The most common response was about how they were enjoying work (31: 51 percent). The young people talked about how they were enjoying earning money, as well as working in an area they were interested in, learning new skills, or experiencing new challenges:

> It's the bomb! It's the money, I love the money. All the challenges like when you're building the cabinets—it's different stuff each day, not repetitive work. (Ex-student 2004)

Many of those who were completing courses (17: 28 percent) talked about how they were enjoying studying and getting qualifications:

> Getting a qualification—normally it takes two and a half years but I'll finish in two years [because of] heaps of overtime. (Ex-student 2004)

A number (12: 20 percent) talked about how they felt they had a sense of direction and enjoyed being able to set personal goals and make decisions for themselves:

> Just being able to make my own decisions. I've reached the goals that I've set … it's time to set new goals. I've overcome the transition of the first few months… I'm happy with my decisions and enjoy my job. I've got direction and am on my way to a career I enjoy. I've got responsibilities [at work]…. (Ex-student 2004)

Others (10: 16 percent) commented on the realities of becoming an adult and the associated responsibilities this entailed. One young man who had become a father commented:

> [It's] all good. I've got off my ass and done stuff. I'm learning about responsibility—family and career… There is a big world out there and if you find an opportunity you have to grab it. You develop as a person—you need to experience life. You don't know everything at a young age. (Ex-student 2004)

Most framed their experiences positively even if they were unemployed and searching for work. For example, one young woman who was having difficulty finding a job three months after completing a certificate in business studies at AUT said:

> It's pretty good. Every time I go looking for jobs it's always about computing and I feel confident because I know a lot about computing because of what I have learnt at school [high school and AUT]. It's motivating knowing that I can get that job… (Ex-student 2004)

One of the reasons for this optimism could be that many of the young people in this study came from low socioeconomic backgrounds and lived with family members who were unemployed or working in unskilled occupations.[18] This may have shaped their expectations. Another reason is that many of the young people in this study were from Pasifika backgrounds. During all phases of this study these young people showed a tendency to frame their experiences more positively than their counterparts of other ethnicities.

The optimism of young people in the face of an uncertain job market has been commented on elsewhere (Bye, 2001; Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). Dwyer and Wyn note that for the young people in the Australian *Life-Patterns* project, establishing a happy working life had been harder than establishing a happy social life. They suggest that one of the reasons for this is an "ambition paradox" in that young people have post-tertiary career aspirations that are not met. As many of the young people in this current study had not yet finished their initial tertiary study options, many had not yet faced this situation. But there was evidence that some were having this difficulty in regard to some of their initial work or study choices.

Potential and actual barriers to study and career plans

In 2002 approximately half (43: 54 percent) of the 80 young people who had study plans for the future, and just over one-third (33: 38 percent) of the 87 young people who had career plans, considered there were potential barriers to these plans. The main barriers identified were the cost of study or living, not having the right qualifications or skills, a lack of motivation, a lack of parental support, and peer pressure.

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[18] Details about the young people's family circumstances can be found in the phase 1 report.

In 2004, although most of the young people described the positive aspects of their situation, a number (17: 28 percent) described how some of the constraints they described in 2002 had become a reality. Ten were not doing the job they wanted to do. Some felt constrained by the competitive nature of the employment market in the areas they were interested:

> I got qualification in something I like. I want a job, I'm not so happy about not having one. It's harder than I thought to get into chefing—it's competitive. (Ex-student 2004)

Others noted that they did not have the skills or the qualifications they needed to get work. One young person who had been unemployed for six months after finishing a hospitality course at a PTE, and then working as a waiter for four months said:

> Being a [music] technician was my original goal… I knew the extent of the industry and I knew I didn't have anywhere near enough skills to get a job… (Ex-student 2004)

A few were not able to do the course they wanted or felt constrained by their family, financial, or personal health circumstances. One young person who had been unemployed for three months after finishing certificates in travel and business at a PTE said:

> It's stink because everybody else is making decisions for me, instead of me making my own choices—pushing me in one direction but I want to go the other direction. I want control over my choices. I want to move out, and prove my parents wrong. (Ex-student 2004)

Changing plans and perceptions

Over one-third (23: 38 percent) commented that if they were able to repeat the time since leaving school they would have done things differently. As a result of initial activities that had not met their expectations, new experiences and information, or changed circumstances, a number had changed their plans. One-third (23: 38 percent) had changed their ideas about the sort of work they wanted to do. One young person who had always had a dream to be in the army commented that she was sick of being "mucked around". She stated:

> I got acceptance letters, and then they said I wasn't in! So I'm not so sure about the army now. I thought I'd give it one more shot and see if they say yes. (Ex-student 2004)

Another changed her plans after accessing new information about a wider range of careers:

> I wanted to be a travel agent but now I want to be in marketing or work as an advertising consultant because the average income is higher and it sounds more interesting. (Ex-student 2004)

One-fifth (12: 20 percent) had changed their mind about the courses they were studying, mostly because, from their experience of a course, or papers within a course, they found they did not enjoy it. Other reasons included: they had found a course that would give them better qualifications or was better matched to their initial or new interests; the cost of courses; and a lack of family support.

Summary

Key messages about tertiary study

Most of the young people in this study had either engaged in or were planning tertiary study. The initial activities of these young people tended to define their future study intentions. These data show that those who stayed for the full 2002 school year tended to have different experiences than those who left school early. Those who stayed at school tended to develop firmer study plans, act on these plans, and study at polytechnics and universities. Those who left during 2002 tended to have less firm study plans and study for lower level qualifications at PTEs or polytechnics.

Those who had studied at polytechnics or universities were more likely to have developed plans to study for higher qualifications at these institutions. In contrast, study at a PTE did not lead to tertiary staircasing in the same way. These data are supported by national statistics that show that, out of the five types of tertiary providers, PTEs have the lowest progression rates in the year following completed study (Ministry of Education, 2004).[19]

Although many of the young people, both those who stayed at school in 2002, and those who did not, tended not to follow through on all of the details of their study plans. Setting some form of concrete tertiary study plan at school, so that they could follow through aspects of it once they left school, appeared to be one way of encouraging tertiary participation. This finding has been noted in other studies (Boyd et al., 2001; Maani, 2000). Chapter 9 explores the different ways the schools supported students to develop plans by making bridges to the tertiary environment.

Whilst at school many of the young people appeared to have gaps in their knowledge about tertiary study options and qualifications. Although many developed more knowledge about these options during 2002, for some, particularly those who went on to study at PTEs, these gaps seemed to continue. The findings from this study indicate a need for students to be better supported to make subject choices at school that relate to their interests and goals, to be better informed about where school and tertiary qualifications lead, and to be supported to access information about the full range of qualifications and courses in the tertiary environment.

Some international studies indicate that in the longer term young people's post-tertiary career aspirations may not be met. There was some evidence that this may be the case for some of the young people in this study, but New Zealand statistics show that those who do tertiary study are better off in the longer term in terms of their ability to find work and gain higher incomes.

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[19] These rates may differ in the long term.

Key messages about work

This study examines the short-term outcomes for a group of young people in their first two years out of school. In the *Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth* (LSAY) the first year out of school has been shown to be pivotal in setting a pattern for young people, especially for those who do not obtain tertiary qualifications (Lamb & McKenzie, 2001). Internationally there is evidence to show that youth unemployment, especially in the first year after finishing formal education, can have a negative effect on young people's subsequent job prospects and earning power (Ryan, 2001).

In 2004 as most of the young people in this study were currently engaged in full-time work or study, and only a couple seemed set in a pattern of longer-term unemployment, it appears that in the short term at least they were experiencing a "successful" transition using a traditional definition of success.[20] Another indicator of success that should be considered is the views of the young people, most of whom considered that their life was going relatively well for them at this point in time. Many came from families whose members were unemployed or working in unskilled occupations. This may have shaped their expectations. Some had assumed it would be difficult to find a job and were pleased that they had found any type of work and were able to support themselves, or that they had successfully completed tertiary study. Many were clearly enjoying having money to spend.

International research indicates that the "new workers" in today's environment are likely to go through a protracted period of experimenting with different options. This pattern was evident for some of the young people in this study, whereas others, particularly those doing apprenticeships or working in trades (such as Pele – see his story in Chapter 3), appeared to be on more traditional pathways. This information indicates that for these young people conceptions of the "old worker" (that is, those who have set career progressions), co-existed alongside those of the "new worker" (that is, those who are existing in a workforce that is flexible, casualised, and requires constant upskilling). This suggests that to best support young people, policies and programmes need to cater for the co-existence of both these conceptions.

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[20] In the LSAY study those who spent their first year out of school in full-time work, study, or training were more likely to use these experiences as a "stepping stone" to a "successful" transition, defined as three or more years of continuous full-time employment (Lamb & McKenzie, 2001).

5. The contribution positive attitudes towards school make to retention and transition

Introduction

One way of exploring whether the programmes contributed to students' retention and transition is by examining students' attitudes towards school. Research has shown that attitudes towards school can be important predictors of school retention (Ainley & Sheret, 1992; McMillan & Marks, 2003). Positive attitudes towards school can also be connected to smoother transitions from school as those who stay longer at school are likely to gain more qualifications which increases the likelihood of them continuing on to tertiary study and maintaining full-time employment after completing study (Lamb & McKenzie, 2001).

This chapter summarises the data we collected on students' attitudes to school, retention, and patterns of attendance. It examines the connections between these factors, and discusses the aspects of the programmes that contributed to the positive shifts observed.

Changing views of school

Over the course of 2002 many of the young people in this study experienced a dramatic turnaround in their attitudes towards school that was also reflected in their attendance rates. Table 12 shows the data from an attitude scale[21] completed by the 74 students who stayed at school throughout 2002. A significant positive shift in the attitudes of these students was obvious. Overall, there was a positive movement on all but two of the scale items, and most of this movement was statistically significant. Students expressed more positive views about their relationships with teachers, how relevant and interesting they perceived their learning at school to be, their ability as a student, and how they felt about themselves. Responses to items relating to peers (which were already positive at the start of 2002) stayed similar.

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[21] This scale contained 31 items. During interviews students completed this scale in addition to answering other closed and open-ended questions about their attitudes to school.

Table 12 **Students' attitudes to school at the start and end of 2002 (N=74)**

	Start of 2002				End of 2002			
School is a place where:	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Dis-agree %	Strongly disagree %	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Dis-agree %	Strongly disagree %
Relevance								
I am given the chance to do work that really interests me**	12	68	19	1	36	59	4	-
The skills I learn will be of use to me when I leave school*	45	41	12	3	58	39	3	-
The work I do is good preparation for the future*	36	53	7	4	57	39	4	-
The things I am taught are worthwhile learning*	39	46	14	1	55	42	3	-
The things I learn are important to me	46	41	12	1	46	51	3	-
Teacher relationships								
Teachers are fair and just**	19	49	28	4	26	69	5	-
Teachers listen to what I say*	16	45	34	4	30	52	18	-
I don't get on with my teachers*	4	14	50	32	1	1	38	59
I like my teachers**	23	62	9	5	41	58	-	1
Positivity								
I feel happy	43	45	12	-	46	49	5	-
I enjoy myself *	31	54	12	3	47	50	3	-
Teachers help me to do my best*	35	53	9	3	57	41	3	-
I get all the help I need	31	50	16	3	36	54	9	-
Success and learning								
I get good marks**	11	38	45	7	20	65	15	-
I am a success as a student**	16	50	27	7	31	61	8	-
I achieve a standard in my work I consider satisfactory*	18	54	27	1	31	61	7	1
I like learning**	24	49	23	4	35	61	4	-
I always try to do my best*	36	47	12	4	47	47	5	-
I find that learning is a lot of fun*	16	55	22	7	27	61	12	-
Other scale items								
I get bored*	16	39	28	16	5	27	41	27
I feel confident*	26	64	11	-	46	54	-	-
I get restless	5	47	38	9	7	31	41	22
I keep out of trouble*	22	47	20	11	41	43	14	3
I learn most things pretty quickly*	18	57	24	1	34	54	11	1
I know how to cope with the work*	15	68	18	-	31	62	7	-
I get tired of trying	12	33	42	12	9	23	35	32
I have good friends	76	23	1	-	73	27	-	-
I could do better work if I tried harder*	53	39	7	1	36	50	5	8
I get a hard time from other students	3	12	36	49	1	8	30	61
Things I learn at school are not much use for my future*	4	16	47	32	-	5	38	57
I like to ask questions in class	18	55	20	7	23	53	24	-

* Indicates a significant movement where *p* is between 0.05 and 0.0001.

** Indicates a highly significant movement where *p* < 0.0001.

Differences between student groups and schools

At the start and end of 2002 we used a factor analysis to group the attitudinal items. At the end of 2002 the data clustered in four factors that we named:

- relevance;
- teacher relationships;
- positivity; and
- success and learning.

The items that correspond to each factor are shown in the table above.

At the start of 2002, an analysis of variance on the factors showed differences for all four factors between students in the three main ethnic groups in the study—Māori, Pasifika, and Pākehā—and between the seven schools. Pākehā and Māori students tended to express less positive views than Pasifika students, and students from one school clearly showed the most positive attitudes for all factors.[22]

At the end of 2002, the data showed a convergence of attitudes for all four factors. Unlike the start of 2002, the end-of-year data showed no significant differences between the three main ethnic groups, nor between schools. Essentially, students at all schools had become more similar, and more positive in their attitudes. Their views now resembled the students at the school who were the most positive at the start of 2002. Pākehā students had the most positive attitude changes, while the attitudes of Pasifika students were the most stable.[23]

A repeated measures analysis[24] revealed differences between schools in the way that attitudes shifted during the year. For the two factors, "teacher relationships" and "positivity", schools where students began with the most negative opinions experienced a greater shift than schools where students started with more positive attitudes. For the two other factors—"Relevance" and "success and learning"—the viewpoints of students at all the schools had moved in a similarly positive way.

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[22] When we began this study, the students at this school were in the first year of a programme, but in the second year of a two-year course. Interviews with students indicated that their attitudes towards school had started to change from when they started their two-year course.

[23] In general it is difficult to untangle the school effect from the ethnicity effect given that most of the schools in this study attracted students from predominantly one main ethnic group.

[24] A repeated measures analysis compares group means (as does an ANOVA) for the same group at different time points, and determines whether the data provide sufficient evidence of a change in the mean over time.

Motivation towards, and liking of, school

Students who stayed at school in 2002

The positive shifts on the attitude scale that were observed for the students who stayed at school in 2002 were also evident from other interview data. As shown in Tables 13 and 14, the students who were still at school rated their motivation towards school and their liking of school significantly higher at the end of 2002 compared with the start of 2002.

Table 13 **Students who stayed at school: Motivation towards school (N=74)**

	A lot	Quite a bit	A bit	Not much	Not much at all
Start 2002	16 (22%)	21 (28%)	15 (20%)	18 (24%)	4 (5%)
End 2002	30 (41%)	29 (39%)	13 (18%)	-	2 (3%)

Table 14 **Students who stayed at school: Liking of school (N=74)**

	A lot	Quite a bit	A bit	Not much	Not much at all
Start 2002	16 (22%)	17 (23%)	24 (32%)	14 (19%)	3 (4%)
End 2002	35 (47%)	24 (32%)	15 (20%)	-	-

Students who left school during 2002

We asked the young people who left school during 2002 to reflect on how they felt about school at the point they left. Their attitudes had not shifted in the same way as their counterparts who stayed at school, as shown in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 15 **Students who left school during 2002: Motivation towards school (N=23)**

	A lot N	Quite a bit N	A bit N	Not much N	Not much at all N	Not sure N
Start 2002	3	4	8	4	3	1
End 2002	1	3	9	4	6	-

Table 16 **Students who left school during 2002: Liking of school (N=23)**

	A lot N	Quite a bit N	A bit N	Not much N	Not much at all N
Start 2002	1	8	6	3	5
End 2002	3	5	5	6	4

The connection between attitudes to school and feeling prepared for life outside school

At both the start and end of 2002, students' level of preparedness for life outside school was associated with their attitudes to school. Students who felt very motivated by school, liked school

a lot, and/or considered they had done very well at school were more likely to indicate that they were "very well" prepared for life outside school. These connections were also shown in the parent data.

Reasons for attitude changes

There was a substantial degree of commonality across schools in the reasons students gave for their increased positive outlook on school. For most it was the interaction of a number of aspects of their course that had prompted these changes. One key reason was that most (88 percent of those who stayed at school and 83 percent of those who left during 2002) perceived their programme to be different in nature, and an improvement on, their past school experiences. Table 17 shows what the young people thought was different, and what they liked most about their programme or the people who ran it.

Table 17   **Young people's views on their 2002 school courses (N=97*)**

Aspect of course	Different from other courses		Liked the most about course	
Relationships	N	%	N	%
Teacher relationships/treated like an adult	25	26	48	49
Peer relationships/working with peers	13	13	12	12
Discipline not as strict	7	7	1	1
Nature of subjects				
More practical	23	24	21	22
More fun	14	14	18	19
Content is new	8	8	13	13
More motivating	8	8	4	4
Related to personal plans or interests	7	7	8	8
Off-site learning				
Non-school provider/off-site learning or trips	14	14	23	24
Work experience	12	12	18	19
Structure of learning				
Work is easier	17	18	3	3
Style of assessment	14	14	6	6
Independent learning/work at own pace	11	11	5	5
Flexibility/choice of subjects or content	6	6	3	3
Structure of day is different/stay together as class	7	7	1	1
Other, e.g., smaller classes, wearing mufti	7	7	8	8
Nothing/not sure	13	13	6	6

* This table includes data from the 74 students who stayed at school during 2002 and the 23 who left during the year.

The different relationships students had with teachers was the most commonly mentioned aspect of the programmes that was different, was liked the most, and which contributed to attitude changes towards school. The new and more relevant content, and the different structure of these courses, were other reasons given for attitudinal changes, as summed up by one young person's reflections in 2004:

> …because I went into the institute and that was a lot better for what I've been doing than the mainstream. It seemed more practical and relevant to what I wanted to do than the actual school work in the mainstream. Socially it was a lot better 'cause you went out on course days and teambuilding. It was a lot better than sitting in the classroom being quiet for the teacher. It's more like being in the workplace… It was good to get out and actually *do* it and not just talk about it, or write about doing it! (Ex-student 2004)

This quote indicates the value these young people placed on practical and off-site learning experiences. In an evaluation of the Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource[25] (STAR) courses, Vaughan and Kenneally (2003) report similar reasons for students' enthusiasm for off-site courses. In Australia, similar findings have been reported for students completing VET in schools (University of Melbourne, 2001), and for students in the LSAY study who participated in work experience or workplace learning (Fullarton, 1999).

Gaining qualifications and/or having more success at school were other key reasons for students' attitudinal changes. Students noted that the internally-assessed and self-paced nature of unit standard assessment assisted them to gain qualifications.

Attitudes towards "theory" and core literacy and numeracy courses

By the end of 2002 most of the students who stayed at school held positive views about their main subject areas. Two aspects of their programme of study they did not like were the "theory" work that was part of their main subject areas, and their core courses such as numeracy and literacy (communications or English). This was mostly because they did not enjoy the writing or theoretical parts of these courses.

To make the "theory" aspects of the courses more relevant to students, some schools had made efforts to connect core literacy and numeracy courses with the work students undertook in their main subject areas. A number of students appreciated this subject integration. They also stated that more of these links needed to be made. The students who left school during 2002 made similar comments.

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[25] Parts of the programmes at six of the schools in this current study were funded by STAR.

Parents' views on their child's attitudes towards school

Parents' views at the start of 2002

At the start of 2002, we asked parents to describe their child's attitude to school before they started their 2002 course. On the whole, parents were divided into two quite distinct groups. The largest group, containing approximately half of the parents, said that their child's attitude to school was obviously negative or that their child did not enjoy school. This group comprised most of the parents of Pākehā or Māori students. The most common explanations given for a child's negative opinions of school were that they did not do well or found the work too hard, were bored or not motivated by school, had problems with peers or were distracted by peers, and/or did not get on with teachers. Almost half of these parents said that their child's attitude had changed since Year 9 or Year 10. Most had noticed a negative change.

A smaller group of parents, about one-third, described positive attitudes or behaviours towards school. This group mostly consisted of parents of Pasifika students.

Parents' views at end of 2002

At the end of 2002 almost two-thirds (27: 61 percent) of the parents reported noticing a positive shift in their child's attitudes towards school during 2002. About one-third (16: 36 percent) noticed no change, and only one parent, of a student who had left school, reported having noticed a negative change. The parents who reported their child's attitude was negative at the start of 2002, that is, the parents of Māori and Pākehā students, were more likely than the parents of Pasifika students to report positive attitudinal changes at the end of the year.

Table 18 shows parents' views on students' motivation towards school and enjoyment of school at the start and end of 2002. At the end of 2002, parents were more likely to rate their child in the top two points of the scale compared with the start of the year. There were no significant differences by ethnicity.

Table 18   **Parents' views on students' attitudes towards school (N=44)**

	A lot	Quite a bit	A bit	Not much	Not much at all	Not sure/NA
Students' motivation towards school						
Motivated by school (start 2002)	11 (26%)	8 (19%)	10 (23%)	8 (19%)	6 (14%)	-
Motivated by school (end 2002 still at school)	21 (60%)	9 (26%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	-	1 (3%)
Motivated by school (end 2002 left school)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	-	1 (11%)	-
Students' liking of school						
Liked school (start 2002)	14 (33%)	7 (16%)	8 (19%)	7 (16%)	7 (16%)	-
Liked school (end 2002 still at school)	20 (57%)	9 (26%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	-	2 (6%)
Liked school (end 2002 left school)	5 (56%)	1 (11%)	-	2 (22%)	-	1 (11%)

We asked parents a number of questions about the reasons for their child's attitude changes to school and the elements of the courses which parents considered had helped keep their child at school. The three explanations most frequently given by parents were similar to those given by students, that is, that the young people:

• found their courses enjoyable due to the practical course content which was related to their interests;
• got on well with and/or received encouragement from their teachers; and
• got a lot of value from the work experience activities they engaged in.

Patterns of attendance

Another measure of student attitudes towards school is attendance. We examined the attendance data collected for the 2001 and 2002 school years to ascertain whether the attitudinal changes we found were reflected in this data.

As noted in Chapter 1, we experienced some difficulty in obtaining full data for the 119 students in the study. We had absentee data for 2001 (that is, for the year prior to their entry into the programmes in this study) for 93 students (78 percent), and 2002 data for 70 (59 percent). We only had both 2001 and 2002 data for 51 students (43 percent). Therefore care should be taken interpreting the data given the substantial amount missing.

Table 19 shows the average absentee rates in 2001 and 2002. The absentee rate for the 36 students who stayed for the 2002 year, for whom we had both start and end-of-year data, dropped

significantly[26] from 19.9 percent in 2001 to 9.9 percent in 2002. This rate of 9.9 percent is lower than the 15 percent average for deciles 1–3 secondary schools reported from a 1996 survey (Kerslake & Lange, 1998), or the 12.5 percent average for Years 9–15 secondary schools, reported from a week-long survey in 2002 (Cosgrave, Bishop, & Bennie, 2003). These data, combined with the data from students for whom we only had either 2001 or 2002 records, give some indication that the absentee rate of students who stayed at school may have dropped overall.

This trend of increased attendance was not evident for the young people who left school during the year. Their average absentee rate was high, both in 2001 and 2002.

Table 19 **Average absentee rates[27] in 2001 and 2002**

	Average absentee rate 2001		Average absentee rate 2002	
	%	Sample	%	Sample
Students for whom we had some data				
All students	18.8	(N=93)	16.3	(N=70)
Students who stayed at school	16.1	(N=58)	10.8	(N=48)
Students who left school during 2002	23.4	(N=35)	28.1	(N=22)
Students for whom we had both 2001 and 2002 data				
All students	22.9	(N=51)	15.7	(N=51)
Students who stayed at school	19.9	(N=36)	9.9	(N=36)
Students who left school during 2002	30.1	(N=15)	29.6	(N=15)

Differences in attendance patterns between schools

The groups of students at each school behaved differently from each other with respect to absenteeism. The schools with a higher proportion of Pasifika students tended to have lower overall absentee rates. At the schools where students' absenteeism was high prior to their entry into the programmes, teachers were disappointed about the level of absenteeism they observed in 2002. In fact in 2002, substantial decreases in absenteeism for the young people in this study were observed at some of these schools. The biggest drop occurred at a school that had an average rate of 37.5 percent in 2001. This rate dropped to 14.8 percent in 2002. Two other schools experienced a drop of around 10 percent, and for two schools there was no change. For two schools we were unable to make these comparisons because we did not have data for both years.

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[26] A sign test gives $p = 0.0004$.

[27] These rates were calculated for the proportion of the year the young people were at school.

Retention in school

Approximately one-third (44: 37 percent) of the young people who started out in this study at the start of 2002 left school during 2002. Most schools had similar retention rates for the students in this study except that the students from one school were more likely to stay for the full year. Those who left school during 2002 had different characteristics from those who stayed. At both the start and end of 2002 they expressed more negative attitudes towards school and, as shown in Table 19, they had higher absentee rates than their counterparts who stayed. There were no differences between the gender or ethnicity of the students who stayed at school compared with those who left.

McIntyre and Melville (2000) have developed a classification of early school leavers based on a number of studies (for example, Dwyer et al., 1996, cited in McIntyre and Melville, 2000). This classification is shown in Table 20.

Table 20   **McIntyre and Melville's (2000)* classification of school leavers**

Type of leaver	Definition
Positive	Leaves school to follow a career
Opportune	Takes an opportunity to leave school on finding a job or establishing a relationship
Would-be	Stays reluctantly at school for lack of opportunity to leave
Circumstantial	Forced out of school for largely non-educational reasons such as needs for income
Discouraged	Leaves because of lack of success in schooling and whose level and interest is low
Alienated	Similar to the discouraged leavers, but likely to be identified as behaviour problems, be suspended or expelled

* McIntyre & Melville, 2000, p. 5

The 23 young people who had left school during 2002 indicated a number of reasons for leaving which often crossed the boundaries between McIntyre and Melville's classifications, attesting to their individual experiences of transition. From an analysis of the LSAY data on school non-completers, McMillan and Marks (2003) suggest that most young people have more than one school- or work-related reason for leaving school early. This was the case for some of the young people in this study. The main reasons they gave for leaving school could be grouped in the "discouraged" category (12: 52 percent). These young people were bored or not interested in their course as they perceived they were not learning, they were repeating information they had already learnt, and/or what they were learning was not relevant to their interests. The second main reason could be placed in the "positive" or "opportune" categories (7: 30 percent). These young people had left school for a course, job, or apprenticeship that they perceived to be more related to their interests. Some of these leavers were also "discouraged", but others viewed their experiences at school positively. The third main reason (6: 26 percent) was because they were "alienated" and had experienced problems with teachers or other students and/or had been asked to leave school. Some of these young people were very discouraged by their school experience; but others viewed

it positively and stated they were enjoying their course and did not want to leave. One young person left school because of circumstantial reasons—to contribute to family finances.

Parents' views on why students left school during 2002

At the end of 2002 we interviewed nine parents whose child had left school during 2002. The reasons they gave for their child leaving school were similar to those given by the young people. Some reported that their child left school because they had been offered jobs or apprenticeships; others left for courses. Some left because of problems with teachers or their peers. The parents of students who had left school described fewer positive outcomes of the school courses for their children than the parents of students who were still at school.

Differences in attitudes and attendance by ethnicity

Although most of the young people in this study entered these programmes with similar low levels of qualifications, at the start of 2002 we observed that the Pasifika students (who were predominantly from the three Auckland schools) tended to have lower absenteeism rates and framed their experiences of school more positively than the other students. Pasifika students were more likely than other students to report that they were motivated by secondary school, liked secondary school, had done well at school, and that secondary school had prepared them well for life outside school.

At the end of 2002, of the students who were still at school, Pasifika students were still more likely than others to report that they liked secondary school. Pākehā students were the most likely to report feeling less motivated by school. There were no differences by ethnicity for how well students thought they had done at school, or how well they thought secondary school had prepared them for life outside school, giving some indication that many students, regardless of their ethnicity, felt similarly supported in these programmes. Māori and Pākehā students were more likely to report that their attitude towards school had changed in a positive direction during 2002. For a number of these students, their attendance had also improved.

Differences in attitudes by gender

At the start of 2002 there were very few differences between the responses of male and female students on the attitude scale or main interview questions. At the start of 2002 female students were more likely to indicate that they got support at school, with larger numbers agreeing with the attitude scale statements "Teachers listen to what I say" and "I get all the help I need". At the end of 2002 there were no differences on either the attitude scale or on the main interview questions

by gender, indicating that both genders felt equally supported in the environments created in the programmes in this study.

Key messages about attitudes towards school

Within the space of one year, many of the young people in this study experienced a dramatic turnaround in their attitudes towards school. For many this change was also reflected in their attendance rates. These changes in attitude were influenced by a number of factors. Particularly important were:

- the improved nature of students' relationships with teachers in comparison to past years;
- a "hands-on" or practical curriculum that was perceived as relevant to students' interests;
- work experience and other opportunities students had to engage in learning off-site in the "real" world; and
- getting good marks and qualifications and the associated feelings of success experienced.

For some students improved relationship with their peers, the style of assessment used for unit standards, and the individually paced nature of their classes were also important. Attitudinal changes were also partially related to students' increased maturity and seniority at school.

The programmes in this study included larger proportions of Māori and Pasifika students than the mainstream programmes at each school. The data we collected indicate that, although there were differences in how these groups of students perceived their learning environment, in general, regardless of their ethnicity, students felt supported in the environments created.

As other research has shown, positive attitudes are related to retention (Ainley & Sheret, 1992; McMillan & Marks, 2003). Having a positive attitude towards school also supported students' transition from school. Those who had positive attitudes were more likely to have higher attendance rates, stay at school longer, and gain more qualifications. These students felt more prepared for life outside school than their counterparts with less positive attitudes.

It is possible that the attitude shifts observed could support a broader range of positive outcomes for these young people. For example, Pele (see his story in Chapter 3) considered that his improved outlook on school had kept him out of jail. Some of the items used in the attitude scale overlap with the types of items used to examine school connectedness (Libbey, 2004). Research suggests that connectedness to school is a preventative factor against behaviours such as youth suicide and drug dependency (Resnick et al., 1997).

The data showed that at both the start and end of 2002 those who left school early had different characteristics from those who stayed. This suggests that students who are likely to leave school early could potentially be identified earlier and targeted for additional transition support.

6. Relationship-building pedagogy: A prerequisite for supporting student retention and transition

Introduction

In the first *Innovative Pathways from School* report we discussed how the roles, skills, practices, and personalities of the programme teachers, and the relationships they developed with students, were vital to the success of the programmes. At the end of 2002, we examined the student–teacher dynamic more closely. The forging of good relationships between students and their teachers and peers (and with employers or people in tertiary institutions) was a high priority in all of the programmes, as teachers considered that students would not be able to learn unless they felt comfortable with the people in their environment.

Pele's, Huia's, and Rachel's stories in Chapter 3 all show how these young people had benefited from good relationships with their teachers. On the whole, there was substantial agreement among teachers, students, and parents about the essence of a good quality student–teacher relationship and the teacher practices that supported students in their learning and transition decision making. This chapter discusses how the courses were structured to support these interactions, the nature of these interactions, and touches on the way teachers worked to facilitate positive peer dynamics.

The whānau approach

All of the programmes in this study used an approach based around the idea of whānau or family. As part of this approach one key teacher had responsibility for a class group for more than a standard subject allocation. In most cases teachers were with the same class group for approximately half their time at school. The class groups tended to be of a smaller size than other senior classes. At all of the schools this structure had evolved as a way of providing additional learning and transition support to students. At some of the schools, particularly those with high Māori enrolment, a whānau approach was an integral part of the school's kaupapa, and teachers' personal philosophies of teaching:

> If you stay in the way you [mainstream teachers] want to teach them … then you will teach them as individuals. I want to teach them as a body, because that body will look after each other. (Teacher end 2002)

At the other schools, a similar approach was used but not described in terms of a whānau philosophy.

Teachers, students, and their parents all considered that having more time with their subject area teachers helped to improve students' relationships with these teachers, and their outlook on school:

> Staying longer in one class—you can get along much better with a teacher you stay with longer. You get to know him and he gets to know you, and you get to bond…We're all a happy lot with the trades teacher… (Student end 2002)

Acting as role models and mentors

To develop a whānau or family atmosphere teachers shared their life journeys and personal information about themselves to give students a picture of them within the context of their life and family. A number noted they did not do this with students in mainstream classes:

> They [students] need to see you as a person, not just as their teacher. They want to know about you. I am totally different with my NCEA class. They [the NCEA class] know very little about me, other than where I have taught, that sort of thing. (Teacher end 2002)

A number of the teachers were from Māori or non-Pākehā backgrounds, which they considered assisted them to relate to, and be a role model for, Māori or Pasifika students. Other teachers considered that while it was vital they were able to connect with Māori and Pasifika students, they did not have to be of the same cultural background for students to be able to draw a parallel between their interests and plans and their teachers' life experiences and interests. It was just as important to have prior working experience of a subject area, and/or a passion and genuine enthusiasm for this subject that they were able to share with students:

> The teachers are very experienced in the outdoors, they know what they are talking about. (Student end 2002)

> It made life easy 'cause he was a tradesman—people who teach need to teach what they know about. (Ex-student 2004)

Providing pastoral care

Whether a family or whānau philosophy was an explicit or implicit part of each programme, many of the teachers in this study had a view of student–teacher relationships that went well beyond the boundaries of the classroom or school gate. Along with sharing their own situations, teachers considered it important that they had some knowledge of students' home situations and how these

might impact on their learning. Some teachers saw themselves as parent figures. At some schools, teachers had contact with students' family members who gave them information about their family circumstances. This assisted teachers to provide pastoral care for students and support them in their decision making. Being a whānau member could also include putting additional personal time into acting as a support person; for example, by accompanying students to job interviews.

Students described most of their teachers as being like family members who they could go to for support, assistance, and advice whenever they needed:

> The teacher was my favourite teacher out of all my teachers. It's really cool the way he teaches and the way he talks to us as a father—like a dad. He always gets me out of trouble, and when I need help I always go to him and he gives me advice… He's really helping me to get a job! (Student end 2002)

> Mr _____ is really full on—he will explain anything and go out of his way to help you—anytime, for anything—even out of course time. (Student end 2002)

Parents also talked about how their child's teachers supported them like a family member:

> [The director] was like a mother to him, and he got on well with the tutors. (Parent end 2002)

Strengthening connections between students

The whānau grouping also supported students to develop better relationships with their peers. Teachers considered the extra time that students spent with each other to be vital to the development of a positive peer culture that gave students confidence about being at school and learning, and enabled them to develop teamwork skills. Teachers worked to develop a productive team environment in their classes. Many of the activities students undertook at school or off-site required them to work as a team with each other, or with other people.

The majority of the students enjoyed spending more of their time with one class group of peers. They commented on improved relationships with classmates, friendships they developed, and the camaraderie that existed in their classes. The peer norms of these groups seemed to be about supporting each other's achievement, rather than acting against it:

> All the boys—it's just primo! The boys don't want you to leave [school]. If you be naughty they tell you to settle down or you'll get kicked out and stuff. (Student end 2002)

> The people in my class—they're fabulous. If I'm down they encourage me to try again—just keep trying… (Student end 2002)

Some parents also commented on the development of positive peer relationships:

> They [teachers] taught the students how to get on and work as a team. (Parent end 2002)

Pedagogies which build relationships

A number of teachers, students, and parents commented that teachers in the programmes in this study behaved differently towards students and used different teaching approaches than those used in the mainstream. The approaches they described are summarised below.

Having high expectations and perseverance

The climate in these classrooms was founded on high expectations. Many of the teachers in this study did not appear to operate from "deficit" views of student behaviour or achievement (see, for example, Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). Students and their parents described the way teachers conveyed to students that they believed they could do well, and did not judge students by their previous school record:

> There's high expectations… [In 2001] at school I missed class a lot and they expected me to be absent. They marked "A" [for absent] on the roll before I even arrived. What I did in Fifth Form carried over, and they expected me to be the same. [In 2001] I start off being good but they just treated me the same. This year I started with a clean slate. (Student end 2002)

> Her teachers were a big influence. She got on well with them, really well. They gave her encouragement… I like the fact that they gave her the attention and the time, and they believed in her… (Parent end 2002)

Teachers' high expectations meant they did not "give up" on students and gave them second chances. They considered it vital that they communicated to each student a personal interest in them as an individual. Teachers were concerned about students' futures, and were prepared to actively support them in their learning and in developing their goals for the future.

Students could see their teachers were working for them and appreciated their teachers' concern and effort:

> Like how he [teacher] organised courses to get our unit standards up and how he organised jobs for us to go to. I didn't like Mr _____ last year, but now he's cool as. He's helped me through school quite a bit; put me in my place when I have needed it. (Student end 2002)

Taking on multiple roles and creating equitable and respectful relationships

One way teachers were able to assist students to leave behind their negative views of school was by taking on a wider range of roles. Many teachers had clear conceptions of these multiple roles, and described how at times they could be either a parent, role model, mentor, friend, coach, facilitator, disciplinarian, supervisor, teacher, or leader. A number considered that this created a student–teacher dynamic that was different (and more complex) from the norm.

One key role change was the way teachers reframed their relationship with students to be an interaction between adults. Many of the teachers in this study did not use the label "teacher" but instead were called directors, tutors, or co-ordinators. Teachers considered that this was one way of readying students to leave school:

> I think it is important to have an adult working relationship, that I'm not a teacher, I'm a tutor. That I treat them as a foreman would treat them, who's looking after their apprenticeship next year. I get them used to that type of relationship… (Teacher end 2002)

The foundation for these relationships was a climate of trust and respect:

> You've got to have a rapport with the students. My personal philosophy on education is [it's] the relationship that makes everything, no matter what class I am in… If you don't have a good relationship with a student they are not going to learn from you… There's got to be a lot of trust between the educator and these kids. They've got to be given that. To me relationships are everything. The learning happens within the relationship. (Teacher end 2002)

Students considered being treated with respect by teachers to be a key aspect of their relationship. Students frequently mentioned relating to teachers on a more equitable footing as friends, and that teachers had good senses of humour and interacted with them without being "grumpy" like previous teachers. Students and their parents considered students related well to, and were more able to learn from, teachers who treated students in these ways:

> I definitely felt like coming to school more often … the teachers (all except for one) are better than last year… The new teacher had a different approach to teaching and I found that pretty cool! He was more like a friend, not a teacher, and I seem to have got a lot more work done than I usually do. (Student end 2002)

> The teachers are like us—they're just one of the boys. They're different from the other teachers. It feels like he's our mate, not just a teacher. (Student end 2002)

Setting up co-learning situations

The opportunities teachers and students had to engage in shared experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, also supported the development of more equitable relationships between teachers and students. The involvement of other people (such as tertiary providers) who lead aspects of the courses enabled teachers to learn alongside students rather than being a "teacher" or the transmitter of information:

> …We live with them more, we share more with them, and when we go to physical training we're actually working out with them. When we go out on daily exercises or weekly exercises we're actually there participating with them, we're actually growing with them. We're more involved with them. Not like a mainstream system where they go to their class and then they walk out and go somewhere else. I know there's some good teachers that will get more in touch with their students, but I think we as tutors, coaches, facilitators, trainers,

directors, whatever we are, we have many hats, and you don't get the response from the students that we get without actually being with them… (Teacher end 2002)

These situations enabled teachers to have a more informal relationship with students, and it was in these contexts that many of the discussions about students' futures took place. Students commented on this dynamic, and a number described their teachers, and the tertiary tutors they interacted with, as "different" from other teachers, in that they were co-learners:

> We interacted differently with our teachers—they were more or less learning with us. (Student end 2002)

Building confidence and catering for individual needs and interests

Teachers at all of the schools considered that being aware of how to motivate and coach each individual was a key element of their approach. They used a range of student-centred practices to do so. Most outlined the necessity of providing extra support to students who had not previously experienced much success at school:

> They [the students] need a hell of a lot of personalised encouragement. It's very, very important, you know, that you think about your kids, a bit like an astute rugby league or rugby coach… You think about each individual 'player' and think what they need … and, 'How do I encourage them?' Because just standing at the front of class and barking threats (because these kids have had threats barked at them since they were in primary school) it doesn't frighten them any longer. (Teacher end 2002)

> I cannot imagine, with the Bursary girls, having to put your arm around them and say of course you can do this… (Teacher end 2002)

Teachers set up learning situations in which students would feel culturally and emotionally safe, and which enabled students to experience success and therefore build their self-confidence and self-esteem:

> It's my role to initially, at the beginning of the year, to set tasks so that they will taste success... [For example] putting them into the workplace where their needs are catered for… (Teacher end 2002)

Teachers actively found ways to adapt programmes to students' interests. Teachers also made efforts to understand the different cultures of the students in their class, and value the experiences students brought to school:

> [Students need to] know that you appreciate their culture, their personal needs, that the understanding is there for whatever their circumstances are… (Teacher end 2002)

Students described the activities teachers had organised for them as "fun". They also talked about how their teachers had motivated them and encouraged them to feel more positive about themselves. Their parents made similar comments:

> I didn't give a shit about anything and my teachers said, 'Sit down and give it a go and you will enjoy it too!' …The teacher pushed me to give it a go and see how it turned out. (Student end 2002)

> It's good to see the teachers encouraging them and I think that needs to be pushed in all high schools. Students need to have their confidence. In this case it's been the teacher showing an interest, seeing the potential, and following it through. (Parent end 2002)

Setting clear boundaries and closely monitoring students

Teachers also modelled positive behaviours and attitudes to students. Teachers conveyed their expectations in a non-confrontational way by employing a "tough love" approach to leadership that combined a sense of humour with clear boundaries and consequences. At some schools close monitoring of students was part of the student–teacher relationship. Teachers considered they needed to keep well informed of students' progress, and set up systems that enabled them to closely monitor students' attendance and/or achievement:

> In my form class, I have their numbers on my cellphone, and if they're going to be late or they're going to be anything, I expect not to have to wait for a note tomorrow like a mainstream teacher would. I want to be rung that morning that they're away, and I want an explanation, either in a text message or in a phone call; where they are and what they're doing. (Teacher end 2002)

> I know exactly what unit they need to achieve, and let them know. (Teacher end 2002)

This was easier to achieve in the programmes that had a director or co-ordinator who had time set aside for this purpose. Some teachers commented that it was difficult for them to monitor students' attendance when students were off-site attending tertiary courses or work experience. It could also be difficult to monitor students' achievement in classes other than those that they taught. This perception was confirmed by the student qualification data which showed that the unit standards students gained tended to be from their main subject areas and off-site courses, rather than core literacy and numeracy modules.

Fostering independence

To prepare students for life outside school, and to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning, some teachers scaffolded students into becoming independent adults by providing students with opportunities to develop planning skills, self-managing behaviours, and self-assessment skills. At some schools students were provided with a template to monitor their attendance and behaviour at work placements or external courses, or to monitor their achievement of unit standards.

Teachers and students commented that unit standard assessments encouraged independent learning and enabled students to work at their own pace with the teacher as a facilitator. Students

valued this independence and recognised that this was one way teachers were preparing them for life outside school:

> The teachers were really good. They helped us to set longer-term goals. (Student end 2002)

> You're treated like adults and expected to take responsibility for yourself. (Student end 2002)

Sustaining multiple roles

Building constructive relationships with students offered the teachers a high degree of job satisfaction. Although teachers were highly committed to the programmes, some also commented that this level of personal input could be draining. Most of the schools in the study had experienced staff turnover in the programmes during 2002 and 2003.

Key messages about relationship-building pedagogy

Students', parents', and teachers' comments about the nature of the relationship building in their classes show substantial changes to students' attitudes towards teachers during their time in these programmes. This, and the data in Tables 12 and 17 (Chapter 5), suggests that the teaching practices used by teachers in these programmes, and the nature of the relationship building that occurred as a result, differed in nature from that which occurred in mainstream classes within the same school.

Having good relationships with teachers and their peers seemed to be especially important for these students, many of whom had not previously experienced much success at school or who considered their prior relationships with teachers had not been particularly productive.

The different weight students at the same school can place on relationships with teachers has been shown in other studies. In *Learning Curves,* a study of the NCEA and student choice, a liking for a particular teacher was one of the reasons students gave for choosing "contextually-focused" or "applied" courses similar to the vocational or non-conventional courses in this study (Hipkins, Vaughan, Beals, & Ferral, 2004). A liking for a particular teacher was less important to the students who were engaged in "traditional-discipline" or mainstream courses.

In this study, teachers had evolved pedagogies that they considered created a positive and respectful classroom climate and were a prerequisite for successful learning. These practices included:

- building whānau or family-like connections and acting as a role model;
- working to strengthen connections between students;

- having high expectations and creating an equitable and respectful environment;
- setting up situations which enabled teachers and students to learn together;
- building students' confidence and tailoring approaches to the individual;
- setting boundaries and closely monitoring students; and
- fostering independence.

The development of this positive climate was supported by the increased length of time students spent with their class group and main subject teachers, the types of hands-on activities they engaged in together, and the different forms of assessment used.

Many of these practices align with those described in literature about student-centred teaching (Bartlett, 2005; Bryce & Withers, 2003; Russell, 2003; Weimer, 2002), the impact of teacher expectations on student achievement (Hattie, 2002; Timperley, Phillips, & Wiseman, 2003), and with aspects of the literature on effective pedagogy that discuss task relevance, co-operative learning, and the creation of inclusive environments (Alton-Lee, 2003; School of Education. The University of Queensland, 2001).

These practices are also consistent with many of the "good teacher" characteristics described in New Zealand studies about effective practice in low-decile schools (Hawk, Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2001; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Timperley et al., 2003) and in working with Māori students (Bishop et al., 2003; Macfarlane, 2000; McKinley, 2000). In these studies these "good" or "effective" teacher practices are framed as providing support for Māori or Pasifika students. In this current study it was clear that many students, regardless of their ethnicity or gender, responded well to teachers who displayed these behaviours. These students, by virtue of their low socioeconomic status and their failure to attain qualifications, were a minority group, and appeared to have experienced alienation from a school system that valued traditional academic pathways and a curriculum that they did not regard as relevant to their interests or future plans. The approaches outlined in this chapter appeared to provide a safety net for many that enabled them to feel included and valued, and offered them an individualised educational experience that contributed to their enjoyment of, and retention at, school, and which supported them to gain qualifications and make plans for their future.

7. The contribution careers and transition information, advice, and support make to retention and transition

Introduction

One of the reasons the young people felt prepared for life outside school was because of the access they had to careers and transition information, advice, and support to assist their decision making. This chapter outlines the types of careers and transition support the young people reported accessing, and looks at the data to ascertain which aspects they made use of. The main approaches school staff used to offer this support are then described.

Young people's access to careers and transition information

The relationship and information web: People-based sources of careers and transition support

At the end of 2002 most of the young people had either just left school or were deciding what to do when they left school. We asked them who had given then information, advice, or help about courses and jobs. Most reported using the people they regularly came into contact with as sources of support. Only 4 of the 74 students who were still at school in 2002 indicated they had received no support from school staff or the other people around them. Six of the 23 young people who had left school during 2002 indicated they had received no assistance, suggesting that these young people had less access to support.

The groups of people these 97 young people most frequently mentioned as providers of information, advice, or assistance in regard to future jobs or courses were:

- subject teachers (71: 73 percent);[28]
- family or family friends (53: 55 percent);

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[28] In some cases the subject teacher was also a school careers or transition teacher. These teachers have been included in the subject teacher category.

- school careers staff (42: 43 percent);
- friends or other students (34: 35 percent);
- work experience providers or their employees (34: 35 percent);
- tertiary providers who taught courses students attended (18: 19 percent); and
- deans, tutor teachers, or other teachers at school (11: 11 percent).

The placement of subject teachers at the top of the list contrasts with the findings from other studies. Other New Zealand research has shown that family members are the people students most frequently turn to for advice about post-school career decisions (BCR Marketing and Social Research, 2003; Boyd et al., 2001), and studies of Canadian (Andres, 2003) and Australian (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001) students' post-secondary educational choices have found that high school teachers and careers counsellors do not exert a strong influence on these choices.

Some studies report that the importance of the role of school staff varies depending on socioeconomic status of the school (and therefore the students). Boyd et al. (2001) found that the students from the lower–decile schools in their study relied more on school services and teachers for transition information than the students from the higher–decile schools.

This finding was evident in this study for the students who stayed at school. Those who left school during 2002 tended to conform more to the pattern observed in New Zealand and overseas with the groups of people they most frequently mentioned being family or family friends followed by careers or transition teachers.

These data show there were three key groups of people who created a relationship and information web around the young people. These were: school staff; family and friends; and work experience and tertiary providers. The amount and type of support people in each group provided varied, and students' access to some of these groups also varied between schools depending on the emphasis of each programme and the way careers staff and subject teachers operated. For example, the students at the three Auckland schools reported getting more support from school careers staff than other students. The nature of the support each group offered is described below.

The nature of the transition support offered by family members and friends

As reported in this and other studies, family members are key influences on students' transition decision making (Andres, 2003; BCR Marketing and Social Research, 2003; Boyd et al., 2001). But what type of support did the families in this study offer? The young people reported that family tended to give general advice about getting on in the world, such as about working hard:

> They gave me heaps of advice. Stuff like 'Go hard at school, stick at stuff, don't keep changing your mind, know what you want to do.' (Student end 2002)

Family members also gave information about situations they had personal experience of, that is, their own jobs or study:

> Mum gave me information on working at Auckland Hospital and what it's like and working in a health office and things they do in the office. Dad told me about being a cop. (Student end 2002)

This tendency for family members to give advice based on their own experiences is also shown in the findings from a longitudinal study of London youth by Ball, Maguire, and Macrae (2000). They note that families, depending on their social class, differ in the career directions they send their members in, and that family members often offered support that is couched in the form of "interpret the world" advice. This advice tended to be within the families' "frames of reference" or experience (either educational, aspirational, or career-wise) and that family members who had no experience of tertiary education were likely to hand this decision making over to their child.

In this study, a few of the young people noted how family members had helped them find information about courses or jobs outside of their families' "frames of reference" or talked through their options with them:

> My mum has helped me fill out my application form, has supported me, helped me with my schoolwork, and talked through my options. (Student end 2002)

Another feature of the advice offered by some family members was that they "told" their child what job to do, or which pathway they should take. This may or may not have been of interest to their child. This seemed to have been a constraint for some of the young people from Pasifika backgrounds for whom decision making was a family process, not an individual endeavour:

> At AHCTS there's a course for six months. I couldn't do it 'cause my parents wouldn't allow me to do it. [How come?] You know—the Polynesian way! They just don't understand… I told my mum if they would allow me to do chef [training], I would. But they did not want me to. I could do travel and tourism. My mum started to encourage me to do that but my dad didn't want me to do that. I told him I could be an air hostess but my mum doesn't want me to do that. I don't know what to do. I'm so confused! (Student end 2002)

Students from different ethnic groups had different access to family support. At the start of 2002 Pasifika students reported getting less support than other students from family members in regard to school subject selection. At the end of 2002 this difference was not apparent, with similar proportions of Pasifika, Māori, and Pākehā students noting that family members or family friends had given them information, advice, or assistance about post-school options.

Students' friends also tended to advise students from their personal frames of reference, by encouraging them into similar activities to their own, or trying to find them jobs at their places of work. Friends also supported students in their interests:

> My best friend says I should work full-time next year, and study with her the year after that. (Student end 2002)

The nature of the transition support offered by work experience and tertiary providers

Many of the students attended work placements or courses run by tertiary providers, or met employers or tertiary providers at open days or during school visits. Like family members, these people tended to give students information and advice from within the frames of reference of their own life, job, or institution:

> They just told me what [tertiary courses] they had done, like what I'm going to do… (Student end 2002)

> [The employers] gave us an insight into the job. They talked to us on a one-on-one basis. They gave us the real lifestyle behind it, not just what the pamphlets say. (Student end 2002)

During open days at tertiary institutions, and during visits by employers, tertiary providers, and liaison officers students were also given handbooks and information about careers, tertiary courses, and scholarships, and information about course prerequisites.

> The discovery nights at MIT were good, and I read their pamphlets. (Ex-student 2004)

Some offered students a broader view that could include information on the range of tertiary courses students could complete in a provider's area and the jobs related to these courses:

> The Fashion and Faces [PTE] people told me about courses. They went round the table and asked us what we wanted to be. They told us about other courses, both in their area and in others. (Ex-student end 2002)

In a few cases employers or tertiary providers actively assisted students to find jobs or courses or talked through students' options with them:

> At the pharmacy they told me if you want to do this job then you need to get this degree: Level 1. They helped me with information and rang up for me to ask about the course to do the job. (Student end 2002)

The nature of the transition support offered by school staff

There were differences in the types of careers and transition support given to students by the subject teachers and the careers staff compared to the support they received from family members and friends, and employers or tertiary providers. Students reported that school staff had offered them a mix of information, advice, and guidance, which was often tailored to their needs and interests.

Subject teachers

Subject teachers were the people who students most frequently mentioned as providing them with transition support. Subject teachers were students' main source of information about specific jobs, and were one of students' main sources of information about courses. Students reported that subject teachers provided them with information about options that related to their interests and local opportunities:

> He [teacher] gave us these brochures [on courses at MIT] and told us we don't have to take the apprenticeships—it's our choice. All the [career] information came from him. (Student end 2002)

Although information provision was the most common form of support, subject teachers were the people with whom students most frequently reported having discussions which assisted them to explore their options. A number of students outlined how their teachers had acted as career and course brokers by showing them a range of options available to them, and how they had "guided" rather than "told" them about possible options or pathways that might work best for them. A number of students also commented on the emotional support these teachers offered. In this way subject teachers and school careers staff were the main group of people who assisted students to broaden their horizons and therefore step outside of the frames of reference of their family:

> My engineering teacher gave me the idea of going to MIT and furthering my studies. (Student end 2002)

Apart from presenting them with options, and discussing these options, students described a number of other ways their subject teachers had actively supported them to explore their interests or make their next step. Teachers had organised work experience related to their interests, assisted them to collect information on the entry requirements of particular jobs or courses they were interested in, recommended people for them to talk to, organised career-related visits and visitors, assisted them to develop a CV and complete enrolment forms, and attended job interviews with them as a support person:

> He told me what I need to do to get into the army—how to pass the tests. (Student end 2002)

Another feature of this support was the direct-action approach taken by some teachers, who actively used their contacts to help students find jobs or apprenticeships or who supported students to enrol in courses. This seemed to work well for a number of students:

> He gave me advice for people to ring, he set up interviews for me. (Student end 2002)

In 2002 and 2004 it was clear that many of the young people valued the careers and transition support provided by their teachers, which was an extension of the personal attention teachers paid them. In 2004 some were still in contact with the school teachers who had supported them.

School careers staff

The types of careers and transition support that students reported getting from careers staff tended to be different from that provided by subject teachers. This support was mostly based around providing information and giving practical assistance, rather than discussing and exploring each individual's options or providing emotional support. Like subject teachers, careers staff were one of students' main sources of information about tertiary courses and acted as career brokers by connecting students with people or sources of information related to their particular interests:

> [The careers advisor gave us] course leaflets and she got people to come in and talk to us from the specific places we wanted to go to. (Student end 2002)

> She talked to me and helped me with work experience and organised that. She told me about other courses, and showed me videos. She gave me information about apprenticeships, and told me of people who are taking students for apprenticeships. (Student end 2002)

Careers staff were the main group of people who assisted students with enrolment, job applications, and scholarship forms, and were the main people within the school who provided careers and transition information to the students who left school during the 2002 year:

> I went to the careers advisor and she helped me fill out my application form. She told me how to do it exactly right. (Student end 2002)

General sources of careers and transition support used in 2002

We also asked the young people about the other sources of, careers information they had access to through school.[29] Nearly all had used more than one source from the list they were presented with. The list of information sources these 97 young people had access to is presented below.

- pamphlets about jobs and careers (68: 70 percent);
- course pamphlets or handbooks put out by polytechnics or universities (63: 65 percent);
- course pamphlets or handbooks put out by other training organisations/PTEs (36: 37 percent);
- sources such as newspapers and magazines (61: 63 percent);
- career expos (60: 62 percent);
- career talks by visiting employers (for example, army recruiters) (53: 55 percent);
- talks by polytechnic or university visitors or liaison officers (52: 54 percent);
- visits to polytechnic or university (47: 48 percent);
- visits to other places that run courses (for example, PTEs) (23: 24 percent);
- KiwiCareers website (43: 44 percent);
- other Internet websites (27: 28 percent);
- TV (41: 42 percent);
- Career Quest CD ROM (8: 8 percent);
- Te Mana Taiohi CD ROM (3: 3 percent);
- Careerpoint telephone careers information (1: 1 percent); and
- other sources (for example, visits to employers) (10: 10 percent).

Most had access to a wide range of information sources that were both people-based and text-based. A small number (3) noted they used none of the sources they had access to. The students who were still at school reported using an average of 7 sources with a range of 1 to 12. Those who had left school reported using fewer sources (an average of 5), from a smaller range (1 to 9), while at school.

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[29] This list does not include work experience placements and tertiary courses as these were part of students' programmes of study.

Making decisions about leaving school

To ascertain the impact of the careers and transition support offered to them at school when we interviewed the young people in 2004 we asked how they decided which courses or jobs they wanted to do, and for their reflections on the careers and transition support provided at school.

Making decisions about tertiary courses

The reasons the young people gave for their study decisions have been categorised in Table 21.

Table 21 **Factors underpinning study decisions (N=44)**

Type of influence	N	%
Related to interests or plans		
Related to skills and interests	14	32
Compulsory (part of apprenticeship/army training)	8	18
A starting point leading to a job/range of jobs	5	11
A starting point leading to higher level courses	3	7
School or tertiary influences and connections		
School/careers teachers recommended/gave information	10	23
Progression from school qualifications/courses	9	20
Contact with tertiary staff/liaison officers	6	14
School work experience helped clarify	2	5
Family influences		
Family/family friends recommended	7	16
Friends/relatives also studying at institution	3	7
Other		
Factors relating to institute (reputation/local)	4	9
Post-school work experience helped clarify	3	7
Did not have the qualifications to do first choice	3	7
Other	8	18

These young people used a range of different sources of information to inform their decisions about study options. These data show a similar pattern to that collected in 2002. This showed that both school staff and family members had an important role to play in supporting students' tertiary decisions. On the whole these young people tended to rely on others' recommendations to assist them in navigating their way through the complexities of the tertiary environment:

> We had different people come from different universities to talk to us at school. I had no idea what I wanted to do when I ended school. In the end I decided to do tourism and travel because it would have been a waste otherwise since I studied it at school. [I chose] AUT

because it's closer and I didn't want to go to a private institute. I've known heaps of family and friends who went to private institutes and got qualification but went nowhere with them. I got advice from an employer when I was working at high school, and she said university qualifications are more recognised than private institute qualifications. (Ex-student 2004)

Making decisions about work

Table 22 summarises the different ways the young people found employment. Unlike the sources of information the young people used to make tertiary study decisions, these data show the importance of "social capital"[30] in the form of family and friendship networks in finding work. The young people who left school during 2002 were more likely to have used family networks. Although family was the most common network used, about one-third had also been directly assisted to find work through contacts made at school.

Table 22   **How the young people found work (N=55)**

Source of work opportunities	N	%
Application		
Applying from an advertisement/Internet	21	38
Asking at places interested in	2	4
Social networks		
Family/family friends	18	33
Friends	9	16
School networks		
School work experience	10	18
Teachers/school careers staff	8	15
Tertiary providers and careers staff	7	13
Non-school work experiences		
Workmates/jobs when left school	3	5
Part-time/holiday/casual jobs	2	4
Agencies		
Work broker/WINZ/Career Services/Actionworks	4	7
Employment agency/ITO co-ordinator	2	4

We asked the young people what had made them decide to do the jobs they did. Their responses are categorised in Table 23.

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[30]   See Bourdieu (1986).

Table 23   **Factors underpinning job decisions (N=55)**

Factor	N	%
Pragmatic		
Wanted money/saving for study	29	53
Took the job that was offered	14	25
Couldn't do first choice of job	3	5
Planning and exploring		
Related to interests or plans	17	31
Wanted to try something new/challenging	8	15
Wanted experience in that area	4	7
School experiences		
School work experience helped clarify choices	11	20
Job related to school qualifications/course	6	11
Post-school experiences		
Post-school work helped clarify plans	6	11
Other jobs or courses didn't work out	2	4
Other		
Family or friends worked there	6	11
Working environment/conditions good	6	11
Continued part-time/existing job	2	4
Other	7	13

These data show that a number had used the career-exploration activities they did at school such as work experience as a decision making tool, but many had made pragmatic decisions about work based on their need to earn a living, support their study, or have a social life. Unlike the choices made about study, many did not seem to perceive their employment choices to be a "decision" as this suggested they had options to choose from. This suggests that the concept of employment choice might be a luxury that does not necessarily apply to some school leavers, especially those with limited qualifications.

This pragmatism or "making do" has been described as a response to balancing different commitments such as work, study, and a social life, and as a response to an uncertain employment market (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). For the young people in this study, balancing study commitments and needing a job to survive appeared to be the more important reasons.

The relationship between school courses and study and career plans

The school programmes had a strong influence on the young people's future plans in 2002. This connection was still evident in 2004. In 2002, three-quarters (61: 76 percent) of the 80 young people who had study plans or who had already started tertiary study considered that these plans were related to their 2002 school courses. Most (55: 81 percent) of the 68 students who were still at school and who had work plans considered that these plans were related to their 2002 school courses. The views of the 20 young people who had worked after leaving school during 2002 were different, with under half (9: 45 percent) considering their current jobs were related to their 2002 courses. Pasifika and Pākehā students were more likely than others to consider their future study or career plans were related to their 2002 courses.

In 2004, although a substantial number had changed their plans and activities, these connections were still evident. The majority (34: 72 percent) of the young people who had stayed at school in 2002, and some (6: 43 percent) of those who left during 2002, commented that their job or study plans for the future had some relation to their school courses.

Reflections on careers and transition support in 2004

In 2004 we asked the young people to reflect on the usefulness of all the sources of information they had used, the experiences they had, and the people they talked to as they made decisions about what to do when they left school. We also asked them to rate the usefulness of the transition support they got at school using a 5-point scale. Most (55: 90 percent) selected the top three points. Only a few (6: 10 percent) noted that they had found this support "not very" or "not at all" useful. The types of support the young people found the most useful are listed below.

- work experience (27: 44 percent);
- school teachers or careers staff (21: 34 percent);
- gaining information about different job or study options (13: 21 percent);
- practical courses at school (11: 18 percent);
- friends (10: 16 percent);
- family or family friends (8: 13 percent);
- visiting tertiary institutions (7: 12 percent);
- visits to employers or companies (5: 8 percent);
- websites/brochures/tertiary handbooks (5: 8 percent);
- learning how to set goals and independently research careers or jobs (4: 7 percent); and
- learning CV or interview skills (4: 7 percent).

No one type of support was necessarily helpful for all. In general the young people found experience- and people-based sources of information and support more useful than text-based sources of information such as websites and handbooks. There were two key aspects to the

support offered by people that the young people found particularly helpful. The first was that it related to their interests and school courses:

> The [school] tutor was the big thing—he put in the effort for you. He pointed you towards things that matched your interests. You could ask him and he would tell you where to look for information, like about car mechanics. (Ex-student 2004)

> Visiting Unitec and AUT and other tertiary institutes [was the most useful]. The education officers showed how their courses related to the ones we did at school and it made it easier for me to decide. (Ex-student 2004)

The second key aspect was that they were provided with emotional support by their teachers that resulted in them feeling more confident about making decisions or taking their next step:

> My 'dad' at school … helped me come up with the right choices, and take my time to make a choice... (Ex-student 2004)

> [My school teacher] was inspirational to me. She pushed me in the right way. I thought maybe I'm getting somewhere so I should stick with it... (Ex-student 2004)

What transition support did the young people think they needed more of?

About one-fifth (12: 20 percent) thought there was extra support they needed at school but did not get. In general the young people found it difficult to specify their needs. The most common suggestion was more work or practical experiences in their interest areas or in a range of areas:

> We could have done more work experience—we only did it once for three days. At the start of the year they could have asked you what jobs you were interested in… (Ex-student 2004)

Some felt they needed more individual support to make subject choices at school and unpack the information they were provided with:

> The careers advisors were always busy. We needed more help choosing a suitable course that met our needs at the beginning of Gateway. The Gateway course I did, didn't really meet my needs as well as another might have. They gave us a huge booklet about scholarships but we needed help reading it. It was too big and I didn't understand which parts to read. I needed help to find the information about the scholarship I could go for. (Ex-student 2004)

Leaving school: Access to new sources of careers and transition support

In 2004 only half (30: 49 percent) of the young people reported having accessed careers and transition information or advice since leaving school. Again, this information or advice was mostly people- or experience-based and mostly came from tertiary staff (14), work experiences or employers (10), family or family friends (6), friends (5), Actionworks or WINZ staff (3), and websites and pamphlets (3). The fact that only half of the young people had accessed further

support shows the key role school staff played in providing this support to students whilst they were at school.

Some of those who did not follow the pathways supported by their school course, or who had decided they were not interested in their first choice, seemed to be having difficulty deciding on a new option or acting on their plans. Others had found new interests and were pursuing these. This suggests that the schools may have been emphasising short-term goals (that is, providing information and support to assist the young people with their next step) at the expense of the longer-term goals of educating young people to manage their own careers by offering students the opportunity to develop career planning skills. The difficulties of balancing this dual role were also observed in the evaluation of *Youth Pathways*—a 3–6-month trial career services initiative for at-risk youth (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004).

Embedding careers and transition support

This chapter now turns to a consideration of how school staff structured courses to provide careers and transition support. The teachers we interviewed considered the way careers and transition support was embedded within their programmes was one of its most beneficial features. As one teacher said: "It comes at them from everywhere!" Careers and transition support was not just an add-on at the end of the year or a visit or two to the careers department. Instead it was infused throughout each programme and provided throughout the year. Support was offered by a range of people, and in a range of different forms.

In this section of this chapter, methods of offering whole-class transition support and safety nets for those most at-risk are considered. Then the approaches school staff used to offer individualised support are described.

School staffs' approaches to providing career and transition support to whole-class groups

The programmes all offered career and transition support to whole-class groups. Subject teachers, school careers staff, or both, provided whole-class support.

The whānau approach: Individual support within a group context

The whānau approach underpinning the programmes (described in Chapter 6) assisted teachers to provide transition support to students. This approach worked well both administratively and socially. It enabled teachers to manage the timetable so that groups of students were able to attend off-site activities. In addition, by spending more time with students, teachers considered they were

able to develop in-depth knowledge about each student's situation and career interests. Teachers therefore considered they were better able to offer individualised support to each student.

Ongoing support

Career and transition support was not only embedded, it was also ongoing. A focus on transition started at the beginning of the year when teachers or careers staff surveyed students about their interests, initiated informal talks about students' future plans, or required students to develop career plans:

> First I ask them what they are interested in and where they want to be… I don't specifically set up an interview or anything, it's just any time. Sometimes we discuss it as a class and because it is such a small class … and they are pretty close, they like to talk about things. (Teacher end 2002)

These initial activities gave teachers information to tailor their programmes and enabled students to explore their options and consider their skills and strengths. These discussions and activities were revisited during the year on both a whole-class and individual basis.

Working in partnership with school careers staff

The nature of the partnerships subject teachers made with careers staff varied within and between schools. In general it appears that the skills and expertise of both groups of staff were most effectively utilised in the situations where they worked closely together to provide services that were integrated with students' programmes of study. At some schools, the school careers services had time allocated to develop a "package" of services especially for these programmes, and subject teachers had close working relationships with careers staff. The group services provided by careers staff tended to be geared towards information provision. Other subject teachers made few, if any, connections with the careers staff. Students were expected to access the careers services if necessary, and their subject teachers were students' main providers of careers and transition support.

Information provision

Providing a range of different types of information was a central element of the transition support offered by school staff. Although some of the programmes more strongly emphasised pathways to work than pathways to tertiary education, teachers at all the schools considered that students needed to know about the range of options available in both areas. A couple of the teachers were also school careers or transition teachers and therefore their role explicitly involved keeping up-to date about the opportunities available. Other teachers attempted to keep themselves well informed of these opportunities by using careers staff or their tertiary and industry contacts to keep up to date.

Teachers and careers staff described how they organised a range of opportunities for students to access information about the options available to them. School staff organised visits to career expos, tertiary institutes, and employers, and visits by tertiary liaison staff, employers, and ex-students. They outlined the range of employment and tertiary options available and gave students information about these options and entry requirements, assisted students to collect information on courses they were interested in, or recommended courses that matched students' interests.

A number noted it was important to refer students to other people or information sources if they were interested in a pathway the teacher was not particularly familiar with. They assisted students to make connections with people who could give them the information they required.

Combining information provision with "real" experiences

A core aspect of the programmes was the use of approaches that attempted to minimise the future costs of transition for young people. In the tertiary sector a wide range of pathways is now available to young people. This could potentially be increasing the risk for young people of making "bad choices" (Vaughan & Boyd, 2005). Therefore teachers considered that students needed to be able to test out some of their career ideas whilst still in a learning environment at school where these risks were minimised.

Teachers attempted to minimise this risk by ensuring that information about options was not offered in isolation. Instead it was combined with "real" experiences designed to assist students to explore and clarify their interests such as practical course work, work placements, and contact with tertiary providers. Many, but not all, of these experiences occurred outside school. More detailed descriptions of the approaches taken by school staff to connecting students with tertiary environments or the workforce are provided in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

Offering choices

Teachers offered a choice of content areas, block tertiary courses, or work placements to support retention and assist students in their decision making. Offering choices was viewed as a mechanism to engage students as it enabled courses to be tailored towards the interests of individuals or groups. Offering choices was also a way of connecting students with people who were knowledgeable about their interests. The programmes varied in the amount of choice offered. Some were structured around choices within one content area such as engineering. Others offered choices in a range of content areas.

Employment skills classes

Most of the students attended core employment skills classes. In these classes students were offered a range of practical forms of transition support such as practising job interview skills or

learning about CV development. Activities such as these also occurred in other subjects; for example, in communications students practised writing job application letters.

Educating students to self-manage their careers

In most of the programmes, class groups completed career planning unit standards[31] as part of the National Certificate in Employment Skills. These standards were designed to support students to research and develop career plans for the future by showing students how to access resources such as the KiwiCareers website, and how to create plans. Teachers tended to comment on the importance of these standards in helping students to develop and refine their immediate post-school plans, rather than to model a process that could be used in the future:

> The most important one [form of career and transition support] is one of the units that we use: Planning for the future. That is brought in, in Term 4, and that's a particular unit that we work through slowly. I emphasise to them that it's probably the most important unit standard on the course, because it helps them develop a plan so they can put it into place and follow through before they leave. So the plan is already there, they've already done the research, and I assist them with some advice, one-on-one. We go through in group sessions to get feedback from other students on what they're up to, what they want to do, and what pitfalls they've run into along the way. So there's a lot of discussion that takes place within the classroom. (Teacher end 2002)

From the point of view of teachers, the fact that students had a post-school step planned and were set up with the skills or tools necessary to action that step was a key outcome for the year:

> …No student should leave here without a CV, and without us knowing where they're going. (Teacher end 2002)

Safety nets for students who were likely to leave school early

Some schools had put in place safety nets for students who were likely to leave school early. One was the targeting, by careers staff, of students who were perceived to be at-risk of leaving school without plans. At some schools it was mandatory for students to attend a career planning or CV development session at the careers department before they were able to complete signing out procedures. At other schools students were referred to local employment support agencies such as Actionworks[32] or assisted to find tertiary courses to ensure that they had their next step mapped out before they left school.

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[31] For example, Standard 10781: Produce a plan for own future directions; and Standard 12383: Explore career options relevant to an area of learning and explore their implications for oneself.

[32] Actionworks is a youth employment initiative for Year 16–24-year-olds. Actionworks staff assist young people to register as unemployed, and find work experience or employment.

Flexible attendance patterns

Some schools took a flexible approach to student attendance, which has been recognised as one way of retaining young people at school who are at-risk of being alienated (McIntyre & Melville, 2000). This flexibility provided a safety net for some students, whilst also supporting them to explore their career interests. At one school students were able to have a job trial for a couple of weeks and then go back to school if necessary. Similarly, at another school a student was working with a plumber for a couple of days a week with a view to developing a career in that area. For the rest of the week he was completing unit standards at school.

Individualised support

Formal individual support

At all of the schools, teachers had developed a range of approaches to providing formalised individual transition support to students. Two other examples of the formal systems developed to offer support to individual students are described below.

IEPs at Tongariro High School

At Tongariro High School with each student the careers teacher developed an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Each IEP mapped out a pathway towards the careers that the student would like to pursue. The IEP was used to select work placements related to students' interests.

Career planning questionnaires at Linwood College

At the start of the year all trainees at Linwood College completed a Future Planning Questionnaire. Each class tutor then worked through this questionnaire with each trainee to discuss their aspirations and if they needed assistance to work towards their goals. Tutors then organised work experience in trainees' interest areas, visits to the tertiary institutes they wanted to study at, assisted them to develop the skills they would need for a particular tertiary course or job, or assisted them to fill out application forms for jobs or courses they were interested in. Trainees also completed additional career planning exercises during the year and had one-on-one discussions with school staff and work placement or tertiary providers about their options.

Informal individual support

Informal ongoing discussions about individual students' interests and career and study plans were also a key element of the career and transition support provided by subject teachers:

> I ask them frequently, 'What do you plan to do when you leave the institute?', and we have a conversation about what that means. (Teacher end 2002)

Teachers and students considered these discussions assisted students to explore and clarify their plans. The one-on-one discussions teachers had with students had a number of features. Some students and teachers reported that these discussions tended to occur in class-time when teachers and students were participating in activities together either off-site or at school.

Another feature was the direct way teachers engaged with students. Teachers considered it was important that they assisted students to have realistic ideas of what tertiary and working life would be like. They spoke honestly with students about their skills, were realistic about the pathways they suggested, and provided them with information about how they could work towards their particular career goals if they did not have the entry qualifications or skills required:

> One of the things I feel very strongly about … I feel it's very important for teachers to listen to the ambition of the children and not write it off, not say, 'Oh, forget about it, you'll never be a nurse.' I feel it's critically important never to say that a proposed occupation or course for a child is hopeless and that they don't have the ability to come anywhere near coping with it... You just say that in order to become a lawyer you've got to have Bursary, you've got to do this, got to do that… (Teacher end 2002)

These discussions assisted students to develop a clearer sense of their interests and strengths:

> [Using the KiwiCareers website] they sort of went through with you and looked at all your interest areas and helped you see … where your interests were. (Ex-student 2004)

Teachers also assisted students to make sense of the careers information they were accessing by discussing and evaluating different options. Some teachers described taking a holistic approach to their conversations with students. These discussions not only considered students' skills and career and study options, but also students' values, lifestyles, and personal aspirations. Teachers also described how they mentored students, provided emotional support, and encouraged them to feel confident about taking their next step.

The approaches described by teachers and students suggested that many teachers were taking on the role of a careers counsellor and using some of the "good practice" approaches identified in the career counselling literature such as relationship building with students and offering individualised support (Krei & Rosenbaum, 2001; Millar & Brotherton, 2001; Watts, 2002).

Subject teachers' approaches to offering transition support were similar to the "straightforward" approach described by Krei and Rosenbaum (2001). In their study of careers counsellors and vocational teachers from four USA high schools who were counselling "the forgotten half", that is, students who were unlikely to continue to college (university), Krei and Rosenbaum found that the teachers tended to use one of four approaches: "college-for-all"; "diplomats"; "hands-off"; and "straightforward". Careers counsellors tended to use the "college-for-all" approach that was characterised by an emphasis on college (university) as the sole pathway, career information provided to whole-classes or in short individual sessions, and a reluctance to confront students who had unrealistic expectations. "Diplomats" tried to subtly suggest to students that their plans

might be unrealistic, and those who were "hands-off" did not see the provision of careers and transition support to be part of their role. Krei and Rosenbaum found that vocational teachers used a wider range of careers counselling strategies and most commonly used the "straightforward" approach. This approach was characterised by the integration of information provision and experiential career exploration activities into the curriculum, a focus on individual advising in class-time, the presentation of a range of options beyond university, and discussions that were handled in a realistic manner.

The teachers who used the "straightforward" approach reported seeing smaller numbers of students with unrealistic plans. Krei and Rosenbaum interpreted this as evidence that this approach was more successful than the other three in assisting students who were grappling with a range of post-secondary choices that did not necessarily include university.

Offering direct assistance

Some subject teachers and careers staff had extended the "straightforward" approach described by Krei and Rosenbaum, and offered students even more direct support. They assisted students to complete work or study application forms, enrol on courses, and develop their CVs. Others used their contacts to find apprenticeships or jobs for students or to set up interviews for students. Some drove students to job interviews and acted as their support person.

Key messages about the provision of careers and transition support

The schools structured their programmes to embed the provision of transition support within a relationship, information, and experiences web. The provision of this support was facilitated by the whānau approach of the programmes, which enabled teachers to build stronger relationships with students and more easily organise whole-class activities and off-site visits.

Through the web, most of the young people had access to and used a wide range of information sources, advice, and personal support. No one source or type of support was necessarily helpful for all. Most of the different sources were important to at least some of these young people, but some types of support, and aspects of the way it was provided, were mentioned as particularly beneficial by larger numbers. The young people found the experiences and relationships aspects of the web more beneficial, indicating that the provision of information alone was not an effective method of offering transition support, especially for those who are "at-risk" of leaving school early. This study supports other research that indicates that students from low-decile schools (Boyd et al., 2001) or non-university-bound students (Patton & McCrindle, 2001) prefer personal contact rather than impersonal sources of information.

The young people who left school early reported making less use of school careers and transition support and relied more on their family members. Looking at what was effective for their peers who stayed at school, it seems that these young people could have benefited from early identification and more intensive and individualised transition support programmes. These programmes could include the two key aspects of the support the other young people accessed: relationship building with a school-based mentor or opportunities to have direct experience of a range of career options.

Like other research, this study shows the role families play in young people's career decision making. In retrospect, the young people had found the support they received from family members to be less useful than the support accessed through school. This gives some indication of the extra role the teachers and careers staff from low-decile schools can play in offering this support and in encouraging students to step outside the frames of reference of their families.

Once they left school, the young people appeared to have less access to careers information and advice, indicating the importance of providing this access at school. Although many valued the assistance they were given at school, the data indicated that a short-term goal of providing support to assist students with their next step was being emphasised, at the expense of the longer-term goal of educating young people to develop career researching and planning skills for the future.

At most of the schools, subject teachers, building on the close relationships they had developed with students, took the lead role in offering transition support to students. Due to societal changes, this role is increasingly important. In New Zealand, similar to other countries, the proliferation of tertiary providers and courses, the increasing costs of tertiary training, and changing labour market needs, have made the transition environment, and therefore the role of those who offer career advice, more complex (Carpenter & Inkson, 1999; Elkin & Sutton, 2000; Patton, 2001; Smith, 1999). To support students to navigate their way through this environment Andres (2003) suggests that school staff are critical gatekeepers and brokers who "do or should" possess key information about a range of qualifications and tertiary options.

Most of the subject teachers and careers staff in this study were acting like a kind of career broker as described by Andres (2003). They had also evolved other approaches that appeared to be effective in assisting many of the young people. The subject teachers had developed a similar approach to providing support that extended a "straightforward" approach described by Krei and Rosenbaum (2001). Their approach was characterised by:

- the provision of ongoing transition support and experiential career exploration activities related to students' interests that were integrated into the curriculum;
- the development of partnerships with careers staff;
- a combination of both group and individual support offered in class-time;
- offering students access to a wide range of information sources, information, and experiences related to the range of employment and study options open to them;

- a requirement that students engage in career planning and goal setting exercises;
- the mentoring of students and discussions that were handled in a realistic manner;
- providing individualised direct assistance; for example, actively working to place students in employment or providing support with application and enrolment forms; and
- the provision of safety nets for those "at-risk" of leaving school early.

8. The contribution work experience and contact with the "real" world make to retention and transition

Introduction

Overseas studies outline the importance of connecting young people with the workplace to assist their transition from school. A cross-country OECD study identifies "opportunities to combine study with workplace experience" and "well-organised pathways that connect initial education with work" as key factors essential for "effective transition systems" (OECD, 2000, p. 150).

The insights offered by the young people in this study indicated that having real experiences of the world of work was the main aspect of their school programmes that assisted them to feel prepared for life outside school. This chapter explores the various ways the schools provided students with these experiences, discusses some of the challenges of managing work placements, and outlines the reasons why the young people found these experiences so valuable in supporting their transition from school.

Work experience placements

Types of work experience placements

All of the programmes included some form of work experience, and most of the students attended placements of some type. There were two main types of placements:

1. Structured workplace-learning opportunities during which students gained credit towards the National Certificate in Employment Skills as well as other National Certificates. Placements organised through Gateway or Apprenticeship Training New Zealand (ATNZ) fell into this category.

2. Traditional-style "taster" work experience during which students briefly sampled different occupations. In most cases students were able to gain the unit standard "Complete a work experience placement" from these placements.

Schools' approaches to arranging placements differed according to the nature of each programme and school staff's views on the purposes of work placements. Those who offered taster placements tended to view them as a career exploring and decision making tool. In programmes that emphasised pathways to employment and apprenticeships, work placements were seen more as a way to offer students preferential entry into the workplace or to assist students to clarify the areas they were interested in within one main occupational grouping.

In some cases the school view on the purpose of placements differed from the official view of the funders. The school staff at one school who were involved in Gateway saw it as a "taster" that provided students with experience in a range of workplaces to support their tertiary study decisions. In contrast, the architects of Gateway differentiate it from taster placements and note that Gateway's main function is "to strengthen the pathway for students from school to workplace learning" (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003b, p. 6).

Length of placements

At most of the schools work placements were usually for at least a week. At some schools placements were organised as solid blocks of time, and at others, for one or two days a week over a longer period. Many of the programmes in this study offered some form of work experience that was for a sustained duration. Examples of different types of work placements the schools organised are given below.

Work experience at Aranui High School

Students in the Trades Academy participated in a community-based work experience programme set up through Housing New Zealand by the Aranui Community Renewal Project. One of the purposes of this programme was to enable students to make connections with local trades people. Students completed a 2–4-day block placement with house painting and decorating contractors, a 1–2-week block on housing maintenance, and a total of eight weeks on the construction of new housing in the Aranui area. Students were able to gain unit standards on these placements that contributed to their Elementary Construction Skills qualification.

Work experience at Linwood College

Engineering trainees attended a work placement every Friday at various engineering firms. During 2002 trainees also attended three one-week work placements during the holidays. Trainees were able to stay at the same placement or change placements each term. The placements were organised by the course tutor and Apprenticeship Training New Zealand. The credits trainees gained could contribute to the National Certificate in Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering Level 1 and a Modern Apprenticeship.

Trainees in the Services Academy attended at least one work experience placement, for approximately one to three days, in the service of their choice, for example, security firms, the army, or the prison or fire service.

The LUMA tutor made a variety of connections to enable LUMA trainees to get work experience. During 2002 these trainees worked on international band tours as technicians and roadies, DJed for school events, and organised and ran a concert.

While on placements trainees in all three programmes were able to gain credits that contributed to the National Certificate in Employment Skills.

Gateway placements at Auckland Girls' Grammar

At Auckland Girls', Gateway students did an 8-day block work placement each term. Students were able to try out different placements or stay with one firm. Placements related to the areas students were specialising in for their National Certificates, that is, tourism and travel, hospitality, business administration, or computing. Whilst on placement students were able to gain unit standards that contributed to these National Certificates and the National Certificate in Employment Skills. The location of the placements included a publishing company, primary schools, gyms, banks, Pacific Island health organisations, and Polynesian Airlines.

Other connections with the world of work

On-site work experience

The programmes that did not include a component of off-site work experience of more than a day or two provided other less time-intensive opportunities for hands-on career exploration that were similar to work placements. Some schools organised on-site work experience. Students studying sports-orientated courses coached younger students or students at other schools. Students in hospitality and catering courses provided meals for visiting school guests or school functions, and students studying a music course DJed for school events. Students and teachers perceived these on-site work experiences to be giving students "real" work skills and experience.

Students who attended off-site tertiary courses also perceived the practical components of these courses as "real" work experience. For example, they worked in an industrial kitchen at a polytechnic as part of a hospitality and catering course.

Employer visits to school and student visits to employers

Schools also made connections with employers through employer visits to schools, and student visits to businesses and career expos. Teachers identified visits from, and to, employers as playing an important role in helping students' transition from school. Reasons given for this included providing students with a wide range of career options, giving them a taste of the "real" world, and providing role models:

> They're around role models every day. Everywhere they go and what they do, within the programme, as well as sports role models [we organised to] come out. (Teacher end 2002)

> We have people coming in to talk to us about the particular [army, navy, police, etc.] services and we are given a lot of pamphlets. The visiting speakers advise us about qualifications we need. (Student end 2002)

Core modules and information provision

The core modules students studied, such as the work and study skills module at Western Heights High School and the service sector class at Auckland Girls' Grammar, also contributed to students' understanding of the world of work. These modules gave students opportunities to gain the skills they would need in the workforce and included information about workplace requirements and opportunities and employee rights and responsibilities.

Organising and managing placements

Most of the teachers were very clear about the value of work experience for students, but finding and managing placements, and monitoring students at placements, were ongoing challenges for schools, and required considerable time, skill, and contacts. Some of the approaches school staff took to organising and managing placements, and the challenges of these, are discussed below.

Organising placements

The allocation of responsibility for organising placements varied between schools. In some cases school careers staff had this role, in other cases it was done by subject teachers, or by a co-ordinator who had time set aside for this purpose. Allocating time for staff to organise and monitor placements assisted in ensuring that students gained maximum benefit from placements. This managing and monitoring role is acknowledged in the evaluation of Gateway as one of the pivotal elements of these programmes in schools (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003a).

Choice and flexibility in placements

Enabling student choice was a core part of the programmes in this study. At most schools students attended more than one placement and were given choice in the placements they attended, and teachers endeavoured to match placements to individuals' needs and interests. Similarly, providing choice of placements is discussed in an Australian study as a way of retaining young people at-risk of being alienated from education (Bye, 2001).

In this study, at some schools teachers were willing to rearrange placements if necessary. For example, although most of the Gateway students at Auckland Girls' opted to stay at their initial placement, their teachers considered it important to provide students with the flexibility to move into another area if their initial placement did not meet their needs, or if their aspirations changed. Although the school perceived this to be counter to Gateway's philosophy, they considered this benefited students more:

> If they say, 'I don't want to work in a library,' I say, 'Well done.' It's still valid. It [choosing a career] is a process of elimination. (Teacher end 2002)

Some courses were more able to meet students' needs in this way than others. For example, some of the trades-based courses offered placements within one occupational area and did not offer students the flexibility to attend placements in other areas if they decided they were not interested in pursuing a career in trades.

Offering suitable placements that matched students' interests

Finding placements which matched students' interests, and in which they were doing more than simple tasks such as photocopying, were ongoing challenges for the schools. In the review of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools programme in Australia, Ryan (2002) raises a number of concerns about the workplace learning experiences that were organised for students. He notes that the placements students most value are the ones which give real experiences of jobs, but these are the ones that are the most difficult to provide. He discusses the dangers of sending students to placements in which the focus is on a narrow set of trades-based skills, or in which students only have experiences in typical placement areas such as information technology, hospitality, or office studies.

Although in this study many of the students' work placements were in the typical areas described by Ryan, teachers went to considerable lengths to source a wider range of placements relating to students' interests and local employment opportunities. The range of employers students were placed with varied and included a radio station, a publishing company, tourism operators, ski fields, hairdressers, offices, banks, gyms, and engineering firms. Only a couple of the young people commented that their placements had not matched their interests.

Preparing employers for work placements

In order to run a successful work experience programme teachers had to develop and manage relationships with employers, including managing any tensions that could occur if school staff, students, or employers had different expectations of the placements.

A number of the work experience providers we interviewed viewed work placements as a recruitment tool. Skill New Zealand (2002) also identified this as an issue in relation to Gateway providers. Some providers described how placements could assist students' transition by showing them career pathways and enabling them to develop the skills needed for particular industries:

> [The aim is] to encourage school leavers into our industry, and show that there is a career pathway, to meet school leavers' needs. Those who struggle academically—it gives them a foot in the door. Our industry is full of people who struggled through school but they fly through our training. (Work experience provider start 2002)

Teachers, on the other hand, tended to view placements primarily as a career exploration and learning tool. This difference between the learning goals of schools and the goals of employers sometimes caused tensions. One teacher talked about "the black and white intolerance of the workplace" and how he had to educate employers to see the difference between employment and a learning situation. Others also discussed the difficulties they had faced in dealing with providers who wanted to recruit students, who lacked training plans and an understanding of unit standards, or who did not provide students with the appropriate level of work.

Some teachers commented on the need to raise the awareness of some providers to ensure that placements were culturally safe for students in that employers understood the cultures and behaviours of students. These teachers described strategies they had found successful in increasing the likelihood of successful student–employer relationships. The strategies included placing students in organisations that catered for the students' community, such as a Pacific Island Health Centre or talking with the providers about the diversity of their students:

> …A lot of people aren't used to different cultures whereas we here live with it all every day. I think sometimes those girls who were very shy, give the appearance of not being interested… [And the employers don't understand that?] Yes they don't understand it… [So do you explain those sorts of things to them?] I do … I talk to them about their cultural difference, appearance—shy in most cases. They won't say what they want to say or feel but if they [the employers] wait a few days they can probably find that out… (Teacher end 2002)

Preparing students for work placements

Students were prepared at school for their placements, which enabled them to gain the maximum benefit from them. This preparation encouraged students to make the connection between their class work and the placement. At some schools, students learned about the workplace and were assisted to develop the skills they would be using at their placement in their core classes. Ensuring

that students (especially those from Pasifika backgrounds) felt confident enough to attend their placements was another important function of this preparation:

> …I primed them up for going out on work experience and to be on their best behaviour and told them they can do it, and people are going to accept them. Because the big issue was, 'We're not going to be accepted are we?' (Teacher end 2002)

Teachers also made efforts to ensure that students had the right clothing and understood professional behaviour. This sometimes involved negotiating with students who did not want to work out-of-school hours. The approach one school took to preparing students for work placements is described below.

At James Cook High School staff had developed relationships with a number of employers who regularly provided work experience for students. Prior to their placements students took part in a preparation programme which included watching the video *10 Easy Ways To Lose Your Job*, and completing a unit standard on work experience and health and safety in the workplace. During work experience students completed a unit standard about their placement. Students were expected to sign a contract, and letters were sent to their parents giving details of the placement.

Monitoring students at work placements

Along with finding suitable placements, the biggest challenge for teachers in running a work placement programme appeared to be monitoring students' attendance at work placements. This could be tricky if students did not attend placements, decided they were not interested in a placement, or if students and employers did not get on well with each other. To avoid these difficulties teachers tended to carefully target placements and monitor them by either visiting or phoning each student, and by keeping in touch with the employers. This monitoring was an important facet of the work experience programmes that kept them on track. It also maintained relationships with employers.

What are the benefits of work experience placements?

Most of the teachers in this study suggested that offering students some form of work experience was a key form of careers and transition support. Similarly, the young people in this study and their parents also considered work experience to be a very valuable form of transition support. The benefits these three groups of people typically reported that students gained from their work experience placements are outlined below.

Clarifying career interests in a low-stakes environment

From the perspective of teachers, work placements enabled young people to, in a low-stakes environment, gain information on the range of pathways open to them, explore their interests, change their plans if necessary, develop new interests, and clarify their next steps. These opportunities were an important facet of the careers and transition support provided to these young people, as similar exploration opportunities were not so readily available once they left school.

Students also valued their placements for the career-exploration opportunities they offered. A number commented that their placements, by introducing them to new options, had broadened their horizons, and given them more information on which to base their career decisions:

> The work experience [at school] was a really good thing. It got us out there getting us interested in things we could do. There was quite a wide choice of things we could do. (Ex-student 2004)

Others described how being able to try out more than one of their interests, or gaining information about a range of options within one industry they were interested in, had assisted them:

> I was thinking of doing joinery but now I'm going to stick with building and maintenance. The work experience helped me to decide. (Student end 2002)

> I got a lot out of work experience at Air New Zealand. It helped me to learn about what the tourism industry is about, and what roles different people play in different industries in tourism. (Student end 2002)

For some students, attending a placement clarified for them that they were not interested in a particular area. For example, one young person noted that his work experience had made him realise he was not interested in pursuing his plan of doing a structural engineering apprenticeship:

> I changed my mind [about engineering]. I just sort of went off it. The place I was at [during work experience] they were just dicks—it wasn't very good there. (Ex-student 2004)

In 2004 he was on a benefit and working "under the table". He was looking for a full-time job but was not sure about what he wanted to do. This suggests that students benefit from being encouraged to develop and explore a range of options rather than just one.

Developing an understanding of the "real" world

Teachers considered that work experience also gave students an understanding of the realities of the workforce and skills that could assist them to adjust to this new environment once they left school:

> And you can imagine the schoolboy going straight out into industry and making his first mistake, and bursting into tears and hiding in a corner somewhere for about two hours after he got his first wind up. I think you've got to toughen them up a wee bit. And that's where

work experience is very important too. So that environment is not foreign to them. It's getting them not so much used to relationships with me, but it's relationship with the environment they're going in to [that's important]. (Teacher end 2002)

Students commented that work experience had given them a clearer idea of the realities of the jobs they were interested in, skills and experiences they could put on their CVs, and knowledge about how to approach employers and function in the workplace:

I think this course offered me a support to make a decision about what I wanted to do in 2003… It gave me confidence to approach other jobs in a businesslike and professional way… People know I have an education and other work experience from the Gateway programme. (Student end 2002)

Students also appreciated the insights they gained about life from their work experiences:

Work experience taught me nothing is easy. You have to work hard for what you want, which is what I'm trying to do. (Ex-student 2004)

Motivating and re-engaging young people with school

Teachers suggested that offering work experience and a choice of placements was a way of making the curriculum more relevant and therefore motivating to students:

I think probably getting out there [into the workforce] and experiencing it and talking to others has really got to be the one [important form of transition support]. I think the closer you can make it [the school experience] to a real-life existence and real-life experience, then that's where the most relevance comes. And that's something I guess as a school, we are always struggling to do, because of the type of environment we live in. We live in this sort of false environment that is separated from many different areas. (Teacher end 2002)

The evaluation of Gateway describes how on-the-job learning can help schools to provide learning that is in context and "more authentic" (Skill New Zealand, 2002). The evidence collected for this study indicates that, through providing authentic learning experiences, work placements could function to increase students' engagement with school. Students reported that work experience was one of the main highlights of their school year. One reason given for this was because they enjoyed spending time outside school. Another was because work placements enabled them to try out what they had learnt at school in an authentic context:

I learnt the skills [at school], and then I went out to work experience and did it. And then they rang and asked if I wanted a job! [I learnt about] databases, computer [skills] … all the main stuff… (Student end 2002)

This supported some to make connections between their schoolwork and their career plans. These young people commented that their motivation towards their schoolwork had increased as a result of attending work experience:

> The work experience had prepared me and helped me to get motivated… This has helped me to decide what to do. (Student end 2002)

Work placements also assisted some to see that they needed qualifications so they did not end up in a job they were not interested in. This acted as a further motivator to complete school qualifications.

Gaining preferential entry into the workforce

Some work placement programmes, especially those in the pre-apprenticeship engineering and trades areas, were set up to give students preferential entry into apprenticeships or other employment:

> [He's had] an excellent year. I worked hard to get him back on the course. He had jumped off the rails. A very capable boy. Last year he basically had a non-existent year. He was doing nothing. We've got him back into school, got him on the course. He's going to be my top student. He has got himself an apprenticeship. I very quickly saw he was into high precision and high finish and put him into [a related placement]. It is definite things are happening there. In fact, I just yesterday faxed all his unit standards off [to the employer]. (Teacher end 2002)

> [The thing that most helped post-school was] workforce experience—You could use the skills you learnt at school—it's practical—you can practise it before you get to a job. Most of the class were set up for apprenticeships. (Ex-student 2004)

In 2002, 12 (16 percent) of the students who were at school at the end of 2002, reported that they had been offered full-time, part-time, casual, or holiday jobs, or apprenticeships from their work experience placements. A number of these young people were doing trades-related courses. Some were offered jobs by work experience providers but did not take up these offers as they were not interested in these jobs, or they did not fit in with their study plans. Some of those who left school during the year were also assisted by teachers or careers staff to make connections with employers that led to apprenticeships or jobs.

In 2004, 10 (16 percent) of the young people interviewed noted that when they left school they had found work through the contacts they made during work experience placements. Another 8 (13 percent) were assisted by teachers or careers staff to make connections with employers that led to apprenticeships or jobs.

Although over half (46: 62 percent) of the young people who were still at school at the end of 2002 had some form of part-time, casual, or holiday job during the school year, only two of these jobs led to more work post-school. These part-time jobs were mostly retail sales, café work, or manual jobs.

The evidence from this study indicates that school work experience, and school staff, provided the young people with access to a wider range of occupations than they were able to source

independently or through family connections; for example, work in a publishing company or engineering firm. It is likely that this was particularly important for these young people, as many came from families whose members were unemployed or working in unskilled occupations, and may not have had access to industry contacts in the areas their children were interested in.

Key messages about work experience placements

The most common way these young people accessed information about the world of work was through the information school staff gave them and the opportunities they had to meet employers and recruiters through visits to and from school. But real experiences of the world of work were what mattered the most to them. The data indicated that work experience placements—whether they were formal structured placements such as Gateway, shorter work experience tasters, or activities such as on-site catering for school functions—all gave opportunities for many of these young people to have authentic learning experiences that assisted in preparing them for life outside school.

In Australia there is debate about the value of taster-style placements given increasing evidence that today's students commonly have access to the workforce through part-time work or more structured work placements (Green & Smith, 2003; Smith & Harris, 2000). Smith and Harris (2000) discuss the paradox that taster placements may be under threat even though they have considerable potential to provide authentic learning and assessment opportunities. Data from the Australian LSAY studies, which show that about 43 percent of VET in schools programmes contained no work placements (Ryan, 2002), indicates that this threat may be a real one. This trend may also be starting to have an impact on the programmes in this study. At least one school was considering removing the work experience component of their courses.

The experiences of the young people in this study reaffirm the value of a variety of forms of work experience by showing how these experiences can function on many levels to support young people's transition from school. The main benefits of work experience mentioned by the young people in this study, and their parents and teachers are summarised below and linked to a range of aims of work experience as suggested by Watts (1991):

- **Expansive:** offers a range of options and broadens horizons;
- **Sampling:** allows for the exploration of interests;
- **Investigative:** promotes understanding of the realities of work and gives increased access to advice and information;
- **Enhancing:** gives opportunities to try out the "theory" learnt at school;
- **Motivational:** shows the links between schoolwork and career plans which can function to re-engage students with their schoolwork;
- **Maturational:** provides opportunities to develop social skills;

- **Preparatory:** provides opportunities to develop practical skills and gain qualifications;
- **Anticipatory:** gives opportunities for confidence building;
- **Placing:** gives preferential entry into the workforce; and
- **Custodial:** transfers the responsibility for students.[33]

For the young people to get the maximum value out of work experience it was important that placements were well planned and managed, and connected to each young person's interests and future plans. Provisos about how work experience needs to be structured to maximise its value are also given by Green and Smith (2003). For example, placements need to be planned to fit with students' learning goals. Similarly, Powney, Lowden, and Hall (2000) note that for placements to be successful they must relate to an individual's needs, interests, and abilities. The optimal conditions for placements suggested by this study are that:

- students were able to choose placements relating to their areas of interest and in traditional and non-traditional areas of employment they might not have previously considered;
- students were able to do more than one placement, and swap placements if they were not meeting their needs;
- placements offered students the opportunity to gain NZQA credits and do challenging and interesting activities;
- connections were made between students' schoolwork and the practical activities on the placement;
- students were prepared for placements and monitored during placements;
- employers were prepared for placements and ongoing contact was maintained; and
- students were encouraged to view work placements as serving a number of purposes; for example, as a vehicle to support them to gain skills and self-confidence, to pathway them into work, or as a decision making tool.

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[33] This aim was not mentioned by the young people or school staff in this study.

9.   The contribution connections with tertiary providers make to retention and transition

Encouraging tertiary participation, particularly for Māori and Pasifika students, was a key aim of many of the programmes. This chapter discusses the strategies the schools used to make connections with tertiary providers and examines the data for evidence of the success of these strategies.

Pathways and connections to tertiary study

All of the programmes in this study placed an emphasis on staircasing students towards tertiary study by attempting to make the pathways to tertiary education more transparent. Internationally, well-organised connections of this type are regarded as one of the six key factors essential for "effective transition systems" (OECD, 2000, p. 150).

At the start of 2002, over three-quarters of the young people we interviewed considered they would do tertiary study some time in the future, and about one-third planned to do tertiary study immediately after leaving school. However many were not sure of the details of their plans. Only about one-fifth planned to go to the local institutions with which the schools made connections.

During 2002 teachers and careers staff used a range of strategies to encourage students to further develop their tertiary study aspirations and plans. By the end of 2002, the results of these attempts were evident with about half of the young people having developed or firmed their plans to go to the institutions supported by their schools. Some had already started this study. By 2004, of the 61 young people we interviewed, only two had not done, or were not planning to do, some form of tertiary study or training.

An example of the impact of tertiary alignment

The role the schools played in supporting students to develop and act on tertiary study plans is clearly shown by a closer examination of the data from two of the schools in this study: Auckland Girls' Grammar and Aorere College. These two schools placed the most emphasis on aligning their courses with local tertiary providers and actively encouraging students to continue to tertiary study. Aorere College was part of the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) curriculum alignment project and also encouraged students to continue to tertiary study at a range of local

providers, and Auckland Girls' offered students the opportunity to gain up to four National Certificates that could then be continued at a higher level at local tertiary institutions.

We were able to follow up 24 of the young people from these two schools in 2004. Table 24 shows their planned and actual activities over 2002 to 2004.

Table 24   **The impact of secondary–tertiary alignment (N=24)**

Activity	Tertiary study plans at the start of 2002 N	Tertiary study plans at the end of 2002 N	Post-school study activities by 2004 N
Study at institution supported by school	7	21	13
Study at another institution	1	2	7
Vague study plans	13	-	-
No study	3	1	4
TOTAL	**24**	**24**	**24**

At the start of 2002 most had vague study plans. By the end of 2002 most had developed a firmer set of plans and after leaving school most had done some form of tertiary study. Most initially studied National Certificate courses at local tertiary institutions. By mid-2004, 16 (67 percent) had firmed or developed plans to study for higher qualifications such as degrees. Some had already started this study. These data indicate that alignment of courses can encourage young people to continue to tertiary study, either at the institutions supported by the school or at other institutions, and potentially can lead to study for higher qualifications.

Strategies used to connect students with tertiary providers

So what were the strategies used by the schools to successfully connect students with the tertiary environment? The two schools described above both had extensive programmes, designed by subject teachers or careers staff in partnership with tertiary providers, which offered students information about, and connections with, tertiary providers. Some of the strategies these two schools, and the other schools in this study, used to provide links to tertiary courses and providers, and assist students to develop and act on tertiary study aspirations, are described below.

Qualifications as a stepping stone

A number of the schools used the qualifications students were able to gain as a vehicle to staircase students towards further study. This staircasing was achieved in two main ways.

1. Curriculum alignment between secondary and tertiary education

One way connections were made between school study and the tertiary environment was through providing opportunities for students to study "foundation courses" which included units developed in conjunction with a local tertiary provider. An example of this is the MIT curriculum alignment project. Both school teachers and the MIT providers considered that studying tertiary-level work at school gave students an idea of what tertiary study could be like and more confidence that they could make that step:

> Students get a taste of the philosophy of our tertiary programme, and get exposed to some of the teaching materials, so the bridge from secondary to tertiary is not so difficult to cross. (Tertiary provider start 2002)

Some of the comments made by ex-students indicated that having this opportunity had contributed to their decisions to attend a particular tertiary course. For example, in 2004 one young person observed that one of the reasons he chose his course was because:

> I did stuff [MIT unit standards] at school that contributed to the course. (Ex-student 2004)

Other courses, such as the Engineering (pre-apprenticeship) programme at Linwood College provided students with credit towards modern apprenticeships, and therefore decreased the amount of time students were required to spend completing unit standards on their apprenticeship. Many of the students who studied engineering courses clearly saw the connection between their school qualifications and experiences, and their subsequent apprenticeship:

> With the [school] course I did I came out with more unit standards and easier. I came out on top. We did a couple of main unit standards that you get a lot of credits for, that are hard to get—but we studied them in the pre-apprenticeship class [at school]. We seemed more set up than other pre-apprenticeship programmes. (Ex-student 2004)

The benefits of apprenticeship programmes have been commented on elsewhere. Higgins (2003) notes that countries with strong institutionalised systems, such as apprenticeship programmes, are better at preventing early unemployment than countries which have less structured systems.

On the whole the alignment between secondary and tertiary education functioned to support students' decisions to further their studies. For some students this process was well-organised. Others found that they had to repeat unit standards they had done at school, and some teachers also reported concerns about this. At the schools that offered foundation courses, moves were being made by the schools and local tertiary institutions to better align their programmes to enable a smoother transfer of credits and more direct and visible pathways to tertiary study.

2. Staircasing to higher-level certificates

Qualifications were also used to staircase students into tertiary study by providing the students who gained National Certificates or unit standards with information on how they could study at a higher level at a tertiary institute. At Auckland Girls' Grammar, students who studied Level 1 or 2

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National Certificates in tourism, hospitality, business administration, or computing were encouraged to do higher-level certificates at local tertiary institutions, and given information about these institutions and their courses. A number of the teachers discussed how they emphasised to students the possibility of eventually reaching their goals, by working their way up to higher qualifications. The young people also described how their teachers or tertiary staff had told them about the steps they could take. When asked how they made their decisions about tertiary study a number of ex-students stated that this connection was one of the reasons they had decided to do a particular course:

> I decided to carry on. I wanted to get a higher qualification from what I did at school. The careers advisor at school said it would be better to go on and get a higher qualification than go straight into work. They showed me information about AUT. The people at AUT said I had to do a certificate first. (Ex-student 2004)

Study with tertiary providers while still at school

Students were assisted to make direct connections to the tertiary environment through the opportunities they had to attend tertiary taster courses while still at school. Most of the programmes received Secondary–Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funding. Three different ways STAR funds were used to organise connections with tertiary providers are described below.

Tertiary tasters at Western Heights High School

In 2002 students who were part of the Institute of Studies were able to do a variety of courses provided by local polytechnics and other providers. For example, those taking a 6-month hairdressing module spent one day a week in a local hair and beauty PTE doing a package of unit standards developed by the PTE in shampooing, hair styling, and providing client service. During the morning students studied theory, and in the afternoon did the practical components of the course in a shop-style classroom.

Tertiary block courses at Aranui High School

Students in the Trades Academy at Aranui High School completed an Elementary Construction Skills course. Some of the unit standards were covered at school, while others were completed during block courses at Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology.

These courses gave students an idea of what the tertiary environment was like, enabled them to make personal connections with tertiary providers, and gave them information about the courses offered and sometimes information about other tertiary courses:

> Doing a couple of courses made me change my mind [about my plans]. I liked those courses more. (Student end 2002)

Some parents also described how these STAR tertiary tasters had prepared their child for leaving school, by giving them a chance to experiment with different jobs and clarify what they were and were not interested in:

> [School prepared her by] her having a go at all these different things and she could choose which she liked the best. [It helps] because it's a course and it's not like a job where if you didn't like it you could get the sack. (Parent end 2002)

Some of the young people who left school during 2002 or at the end of 2002 continued to study with the tertiary providers they were introduced to at school. Other studies also show the value of these tertiary taster courses for students. An evaluation of STAR reported that these courses could give students the opportunity to try out their career ideas, minimise financial risks, and assist students to develop wider career and tertiary aspirations (Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003).

Challenges of offering tertiary courses

Although teachers perceived tertiary and STAR courses to be valuable exploration opportunities for students, they also experienced some challenges in managing these courses. The main difficulty was monitoring students' attendance while they were off-site. Teachers had developed systems to do this that usually involved teachers attending the course with students and working alongside them, or visiting during the course. Finding appropriate tertiary providers and managing relationships with tertiary providers was an ongoing commitment. Teachers experienced a number of challenges in managing their connections with tertiary providers similar to those reported by STAR co-ordinators (Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003). These challenges included:

• tertiary providers who wanted to recruit students rather than encourage career exploration;

- finding providers who offered courses with suitable content, and at a cost and time that suited;
- ensuring that providers structured their courses to an appropriate level for younger students;
- managing relationships between tutors and students; and
- organising transport.

Two-way visits between tertiary providers and schools

Teachers and careers and transition educators at all seven schools attempted to demystify the tertiary environment and encourage students to continue to tertiary study in the areas they were interested in by arranging visits to and from tertiary providers. School staff organised visits by tertiary liaison officers and to university, polytechnic, and PTE open days.

A number of the schools took these linkages between institutions a step further than the general visits most students experience. They did this by targeting the specific institutions, or departments within an institution, students were interested in attending, and by arranging more than one visit so that real relationships could be established, a closer match could be made between students' interests and their tertiary pathways, and students could overcome their lack of confidence about tertiary study:

> Many of these kids are tough and macho in a group but actually lack the confidence to move out of their locality or comfort zone and do things like catch the bus to go to a polytechnic to do a course. (Teacher start 2002)

Teachers talked about some of the positive results of these visits as students saw ex-students on campus or found a course they were interested in:

> All of a sudden he's got an amazing amount of focus and he's decided he wants to go on to Tai Poutini [Polytechnic] next year and study there. So all of a sudden he's handing in all this work which has been outstanding for months, and coming to me and asking me about different things and really just wanting to make sure he's in a place where he can go to Tai Poutini... (Teacher end 2002)

Some students described how useful these visits had been to them:

> Visits to the university [helped me decide what to do]. We get to listen to experts, not just our teachers. We get to be in the environment. It's good because we feel what it's like to be there. (Ex-student 2004)

Connecting students with role models

Another strategy used to support students to feel more comfortable about tertiary study was to organise the opportunity for students to interact with tertiary role models. School staff, ex-students, and work placement and tertiary providers all acted as role models, and sometimes as mentors. These people shared their tertiary experiences with students:

> …they suddenly get a teacher that's similar to them, similar background. A teacher who is like their mum and dad, who dropped out of school, had a family real young, and then took a look and went back to school. If he can do it, we can do it… (Teacher end 2002)

Acting as course brokers

At all of the schools students were encouraged to research tertiary study options in the areas they were interested in. Some of the subject teachers in this study also described how they acted as course brokers. Some did this by filtering the plethora of options available to students to direct them towards pathways that had previously "worked" both academically and financially for past students. The staff at one school observed that the National Certificates students were studying could act as a stepping stone to higher qualifications, but that past experience had shown that going straight to a degree programme could be too large a step. They therefore tended to encourage students to go to tertiary institutes that suited their interests and current skill level.

Minimising the costs of tertiary study

Assisting young people to find ways to minimise the costs of tertiary study was another strategy employed by teachers. This was achieved by supporting students to:

• study for tertiary-level foundation courses while still at school (as discussed previously);
• access training options available through apprenticeships or the army; and
• apply for scholarships or allowances.

Access to advice and information about tertiary study

School staff, family members, friends, and work placement and tertiary providers all provided students with information and advice about tertiary courses. School staff were students main source of information about tertiary study options. Along with the approaches outlined above they also set up opportunities for students to gain information about tertiary providers from career expos and tertiary handbooks, supported students to research institutions they were interested in, and assisted students with their tertiary decisions and to complete enrolment and scholarship forms. The nature of this information and advice is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Key messages about staircasing to tertiary education

The schools in this study used a variety of strategies to increase tertiary participation. These strategies included course and qualification alignment, and the provision of information, experiences, encouragement, and opportunities for relationship building with people in the tertiary environment. These strategies seemed to assist in demystifying the tertiary environment for a

number of the young people. In particular the young people valued the opportunities they had to explore their tertiary aspirations in a hands-on way and develop real relationships with people in the tertiary environment. This was especially important for those who did not have tertiary role models in their family or people who were able to assist them with researching options or with scholarship or application forms.

The importance of this type of extra support as described in this chapter is highlighted by Anae et al. (2002) as a way to increase the participation of Pasifika students in tertiary study. Anae et al. note that many Pasifika young people do not continue with their study. But the assistance provided by mentors in the tertiary environment such as Pacific liaison officers seems important to encourage completion.

A substantial number of the young people in this study had, at school or after leaving school, developed plans to continue their current tertiary programme to a higher level. This shows the importance of providing young people with information about the range of pathways to get to higher qualifications.

10. Tangible outcomes: The contribution qualifications make to retention and transition

Introduction

Many of the young people in this study considered that one of the main ways they had been prepared for life outside school was through gaining school qualifications. This chapter discusses the contribution these qualifications made to students' retention at school and transition experiences.

Balancing tangible and intangible outcomes

Achieving a balance between providing learning activities related to students' interests, whilst also providing the qualifications and life skills deemed necessary for a successful transition from school, was a challenge for the schools. The schools had approached this challenge differently. All of the programmes in this study offered students the opportunity to gain qualifications that were mostly unit standards-based. Some provided students with National Certificates; others offered locally-developed certificates, qualifications that were linked to local tertiary providers, or collections of unit standards related to groups or individuals interests. Some programmes offered students the opportunity to gain non-NZQA qualifications. Other programmes had a greater emphasis on intangible outcomes for students such as personal growth, positive attitudinal changes, and the development of "work readiness" behaviours.

Gaining qualifications

As shown in Table 25, most of the young people in our study were similar in that, prior to their entry to the programmes, they had "low or no qualifications" as defined by the Ministry of

Education[34] or TEC.[35] By the end of 2002, those who stayed at school had increased their qualifications. Most had gained enough credits to remove them from either the Ministry of Education's or TEC's "low or no qualifications" category. In total, 53 (71 percent) of those who stayed at school, and 7 (16 percent) of those who left, had moved up at least one of the categories shown in Table 25.

Table 25   **Qualifications* gained at school by the end of 2002 (N=119)**

Qualifications	Prior to programme			End of 2002		
	Left school in 2002 (N=44) %	At school end 2002 (N=75) %	Total (N=119) %	Left school in 2002 (N=44) %	At school end 2002 (N=75) %	Total (N=119) %
National/locally-developed certificate(s)	-	-	-	-	33	21
40+ credits**/3+ SC passes	5	5	5	11	24	19
12–39 credits/1–2 SC passes	27	27	27	43	29	34
No qualifications/1–11 credits	50	64	59	39	9	20
No data	18	4	9	7	4	5
TOTAL	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**99*****	**99*****

*   Caveats about this data are noted in Chapter 1.

**   Students mostly gained unit standard credits. A small number gained achievement standards.

***   Percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

The importance of offering complete qualifications

The 2002 data showed that students who gained tangible outcomes, in the form of complete certificates, were more satisfied with their school experiences and had a clearer overall picture of their current achievements and future. These young people were more likely to think they had done well at school, feel motivated by their schoolwork, like school, and consider that school had prepared them well for the future. They were more able to describe in detail the qualifications they had gained, and were more likely to know if their qualifications could lead them to further study, and have firm plans to continue to tertiary study. A similar trend was shown for students who gained a cluster of unit standard credits that was equivalent to a full certificate (that is, around 55 or more credits) but this trend was not as strong. These students tended to be less clear about where their qualifications could lead them.

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[34]   The Ministry of Education benchmark data, which all schools are required to collect, includes a category for no qualifications or less than 12 credits at level 1.

[35]   In 2002 the SkillNZ/TEC criteria for low qualifications, that entitled young people to entry into Training Opportunities programmes, was less than three School Certificate passes, 39 credits or less at level 1, and no qualification higher than 6th Form Certificate.

Those who gained fewer unit standard credits reported feeling less motivated by school and less well prepared for life outside school, and had less firm plans to do tertiary study.

The "big picture" of achievement

In general, it was clear that some students did not see the "big picture" in regard to the qualifications they were working towards. A substantial number had difficulty naming exactly which unit standards or qualifications they had gained during 2002. Students (and their parents) often talked about their qualifications in general terms such as "a certificate" or some "credits". A similar lack of awareness is commented on in a report about student views on the qualifications framework (NZQA, 2006). In this current study, an awareness of the big picture seemed to be important in assisting and focusing students' transition from school. At some schools, teachers were attempting to find ways to increase student ownership over the process, and understanding about the qualifications environment and how these qualifications could support their transition from school. One method of doing this was setting up tracking sheets for students that enabled them to chart their progress towards a National Certificate. Some of the other schools in this study were moving towards offering a complete certificate in an effort to motivate students to complete the literacy and numeracy aspects of their programme.

The longer-term impact of gaining a full certificate

In 2004 the impact of gaining full certificates at school was still evident. Those who had gained full certificates were more likely to consider that they had been very well prepared for life outside of school and that the careers and transition support they got at school was helpful to them. They were more likely to have done study related to their school programme and tended to be less likely to have changed their mind about their study and job choices. They also tended to have future tertiary study plans, which involved study for diplomas and degrees, which were related to their school courses.

Those who had fewer qualifications when they left school tended to comment that they wished they had tried harder to get qualifications at school or had taken courses that would have given them more core literacy or numeracy credits.

This information indicates that although offering students collections of unit standards enabled schools to individualise their programmes, the benefits of gaining a full qualification or qualifications with a recognised pathway (such as pre-apprenticeship qualifications or those aligned with tertiary providers such as AUT or MIT) provided more support to students, at least in the short term, as they left school.

Changing perceptions of achievement

Prior to their entry to these programmes most of the students considered they had not done very well academically at school. At the start of 2002, most of the young people who stayed at school during 2002 rated themselves in the middle of a 5-point scale as shown in Table 26. Pasifika students were more likely than the other students to rate themselves on the top points of the scale.

Table 26   **Stayed at school in 2002: How well have you done at school? (N=74)**

	Very well	**Quite well**	**Well**	**Not very well**	**Not at all well**
Start 2002	5 (7%)	17 (23%)	31 (42%)	21 (28%)	-
End 2002	19 (26%)	38 (51%)	13 (18%)	4 (5%)	-

By the end of 2002 the majority of those who were still at school were rating themselves on a higher point of the scale. The differences observed at the start of the year between ethnic groups were no longer apparent.

Unlike those who stayed at school, the young people who left school during the year had not changed their views on their achievement, as shown in Table 27.

Table 27   **Left school during 2002: How well have you done at school? (N=23)**

	Very well	**Quite well**	**Well**	**Not very well**	**Not at all well**
	N	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**
Start 2002	2	6	7	7	1
End 2002	2	4	11	6	-

Students' views on their achievement at the start of 2002

At the start of 2002, although most students had low or no qualifications when talking about their achievement, many preferred to frame their achievement positively. These students used two sets of indicators to talk about their achievement. One was achievement-based indicators such as good reports or parent–teacher interviews, passing assessments or examinations, or gaining qualifications:

> Because I got some qualifications. I thought I would never actually get them. (Student start 2002)

In the absence of positive achievement-based indicators these students also used behavioural indicators to present a positive picture of themselves, such as trying hard or keeping out of trouble. A number considered that still being at school was an important indicator of their achievement, particularly if no one else in their family had stayed at school as long as they had:

I'm still in school. My behaviour is all right… (Student start 2002)

A second group of students framed their achievement negatively. These students also used both achievement-based and behavioural indicators to talk about their experiences. They described how they did not get good reports, or had failed assignments or examinations. Many reported that one of the main influences on their achievement was a lack of interest in or motivation towards studying. They commented that they didn't try, didn't pay attention, or were not at school much:

I never went… For School C [Certificate] I couldn't be bothered so I didn't. (Student start 2002)

I never tried, never got good marks, not even in primary school. (Student start 2002)

Students also mentioned other influences on their achievement, some of which stemmed from their home situation, such as a lack of family finances, overcrowding, and family commitments.

Students' views on their achievement at the end of 2002

During 2002, most of those who had stayed at school for the full year had gained at least some unit standard credits and had changed their perception of their achievement at school. Once they had some concrete evidence of their achievement, these students tended to emphasise this evidence as they talked about their success at school. At the end of the year a larger proportion mentioned achievement-based indicators, such as gaining qualifications, passing courses, getting good marks or reports, or receiving positive feedback from teachers:

I got second in class in engineering. I'm ahead of everyone in the class, I've done all the unit standards I'm meant to and passed them all! (Student end 2002)

A number also used behavioural indicators to talk about the personal growth that had occurred for them over the year. These students discussed how they had become more motivated towards their schoolwork or how they had kept out of trouble:

I used to always be referred for being in trouble, and I'm not this year. I do work this year. Last year I did none. (Student end 2002)

Those who left school early held mixed views about how well they had done at school:

I did better than the last three years. I never did work those years and this year I did a lot of work. (Ex-student end 2002)

'Cause I missed some of the school things. I started off quite good at the beginning of this year and I got slack. (Ex-student end 2002)

The relationship between unit standards, achievement, self-confidence, and self-management

Most of the students in this study who were still at school at the end of 2002 reported feeling more academically confident and motivated by school than they had been at the start of 2002. This contributed to them feeling more prepared for life outside school. One of the reasons for this growth in students' confidence about their achievement was the success they had experienced as they passed unit standards. Teachers and students described how passing credits gave students successes early on in their programme which could give them confidence and motivation to finish other credits, the full qualification, or to stay at school:

> I wanted to stay at school and finish all the units. (Student end 2002)

> I went from not being interested in school in the Fifth Form, and since I've succeeded this year and last year, things have got better for me. (Student end 2002)

Many of the students clearly identified a preference for internal and ongoing assessment, in contrast to the "high pressure" examination environment they had experienced in the past:

> I was getting along better than last year. It's not like you had exams or tests; it was pretty laid back. You just had to finish your work and get it right—not like exams where you get stressed. It's like work [employment] this year; you get it done then you don't have to worry about it anymore. (Student end 2002)

One aspect of internal assessment that students particularly appreciated was having the opportunity to re-sit assessments:

> It really gave us a chance to do well. [If you] fail in National Certificate it gives you lots of chances, so you feel good about yourself. (Student end 2002)

Others liked the self-managing, self-paced environment:

> You don't have to finish everything on this particular day. (Student end 2002)

Students also commented positively on the difficulty level of the work, the practical nature of the assessments and the way they were related to their interests, and having access to help and support from both teachers and their peers when they needed it:

> The theory was okay. We had fun. We had a really cool teacher. Usually in my other subjects it was, 'Copy off the board—read this book—take these notes.' (Student end 2002)

> NZQA courses were better because I'm better at doing practical things than theory. You got help from the teachers. They directed you a lot more. (Student end 2002)

Many of the senior students in the *Learning Curves* study on the evolving NCEA qualifications regime (Hipkins, Vaughan, with Beals, Ferral, & Gardiner, 2005), and a NZQA study on student views about the National Qualifications Framework (NZQA, 2006), expressed a preference for

internal assessments[36] as they were perceived as easier, provided opportunities for re-sitting assessments, and removed the pressure of exams.

Parents' views on their child's achievement at secondary school

At the start and end of 2002 we asked parents to rate, on a 5-point scale, how well they thought their child had done at secondary school. Table 28 shows the views of the 44 parents for whom we had start and end-of-year data.

Table 28 **Parents' views on their child's achievement at school (N=44)**

	Very well	Quite well	Well	Not very well	Not at all well	Not sure/NA
Start 2002	11 (25%)	11 (25%)	9 (20%)	8 (18%)	4 (9%)	1 (3%)
End 2002 (still at school)	20 (57%)	10 (29%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	-	1 (3%)
End 2002 (left school)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	-

At the start of 2002, parents framed their child's achievement more positively than students did with about three-quarters rating their child's achievements on the top three points of the scale. Most parents of Pasifika students tended to choose the top two points in the scale, and the parents who thought that their child had done "not very well", or "not at all well", were mostly those whose child was Pākehā or Māori.

At the end of 2002, the parents of students who were still at school rated their child's achievements more positively than at the start of the year with nearly all (30: 88 percent) rating their child on the top two points of the scale. At the end of 2002 parents were still framing the students' achievement more positively than the students.

Like the student data, differences between ethnic groups had diminished overall. At the end of 2002 parents of Pasifika and Māori students were more likely than other parents to indicate that their child had done "very well" during 2002. Parents of Māori students showed the greatest change in how they viewed their child's achievements.

By the end of 2002, when evidence about their child's academic achievement was available, like the students, more parents started to use this evidence. There were four main reasons, which were

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[36] Most unit standards are assessed internally and many achievement standards, externally. This difference is likely to have contributed to differences in students' views on internal and external assessment.

each given by about one-third of parents, when they were asked how they knew their child had done well at school. These were:

- their child had passed their course or assessments or gained qualifications;
- the parent had received positive communications from school that mostly came in the form of reports, but also included parent–teacher interviews or personal contact with teachers;
- they had observed their child becoming more positive or confident; and
- their child had completed their work.

Although nearly all the students in this study had gained at least some unit standards and in a number of cases, one or more National Certificates, some parents talked more readily about their child's behaviour and attitudes than their qualifications. One reason for this is that, like the students, a number were not sure what qualifications their child had gained. Another is that both students and parents also saw the value in intangible outcomes such as increased motivation.

Key messages about qualifications and achievement

Gaining qualifications was very important to the young people. Prior to their entry into the programmes in this study a substantial number were disenchanted with school, had low or no qualifications, and did not consider that they had achieved particularly well. By the end of 2002 most of those who were still at school had gained enough qualifications to remove them from low or no qualifications categories, and their perceptions of their achievement and schooling had become more positive.

Those who gained national or locally-developed certificates, or a number of unit standard credits equivalent to a certificate, were more likely than those who gained a lower number of credits to frame their achievement and experiences at school positively, and consider that school had prepared them well for the future. Those who gained one or more certificates were the most satisfied with their school experiences. These young people had a clearer overall picture of their current achievements and future plans. They were more knowledgeable about the qualification environment, had developed firmer tertiary study plans, and tended to act on these plans.

This information indicates that offering students the reality of gaining a full qualification, and in particular, with a recognised pathway, was more beneficial for these young people, both in the short and longer term, than offering individualised clusters of unit standards. Offering students the reality of gaining more than one certificate, thereby increasing the choices open to them post-school, was also beneficial.

This chapter shows how, within a relatively short period of time, Pasifika, Māori, and Pākehā young people's negative perceptions of their achievement and schooling can be reversed. Regardless of ethnicity, for many of the young people in this study, success bred success. For

many, the internal and self-paced nature of unit standard assessments, along with teacher approaches that ensured students had successes early in the year and the opportunity to study in areas they considered personally relevant, led to increased academic confidence and future successes which contributed to their increased confidence to participate at school.

This chapter also show gaps in students' and parents' understanding of the qualifications environment. Having the "big picture" about how assessments were connected to a full qualification and knowing where their qualifications could lead them appeared to motivate students to complete a full qualification, and gave them more of a sense of clarity about their future which supported their post-school decision making.

Although data show that more students are now able to gain qualifications as a result of the implementation of NCEA (Ministry of Education, 2005c), a recent report from NZQA (2006) shows that some students still do not have the "big picture" about their qualifications, especially in relation to the completion of certificates. This suggests that processes that support students to develop a "big picture" about qualifications, are just as necessary in the current NCEA environment.

11. Vocational and intangible outcomes: The contribution life skills make to retention and transition

Introduction

The way in which secondary schools and other educational institutions support young people to develop "skills for living", that is, the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills that are deemed to be necessary for their participation in society, is increasingly coming under the spotlight through the work of the OECD (Rychen & Salganik, 2003).

This chapter discusses the approaches the schools took to supporting young people to develop life skills, what life skills they developed, and whether they used these skills when they left school. The place of life skills in the school curriculum is also discussed.

The emphasis the programmes placed on life skills

As many of the young people entering these programmes had been disenchanted with their previous learning experiences or had little experience of success at school, all the programmes emphasised intangible outcomes such as building self-confidence or self-esteem, along with tangible outcomes such as qualifications. Teachers saw these intangible outcomes as essential prerequisites to successful learning, and a way of supporting young people to develop the attitudes they would need as they made the transition from school.

The programmes also provided a variety of learning opportunities designed to assist students to develop practical vocational skills and life skills. The programmes all emphasised the skills needed in the workforce, and the skills needed by young people to function as independent adults, such as social and communication skills. The main learning experiences that supported students' personal development and development of these skills were:

- work placements and practical learning opportunities at school;
- core work or study skills classes which covered areas such as social and communication skills and research skills;

- core mathematics/numeracy and English/communication classes which covered areas such as the mathematics needed in the workforce, CV development, or letter writing;
- skills for living classes which focused on areas such as budgeting and flatting;
- leadership courses and team-building activities; and
- modelling of lifelong learning behaviours and attitudes by teachers.

Life skills and personal development acquired at school

At the end of 2002 all but two of the young people we interviewed described a number of outcomes other than qualifications that they had gained from their courses. The main outcomes mentioned were:

- practical vocational skills related to particular subject areas;
- independent living skills;
- work-related literacy, numeracy, or computing skills;
- social, communication, teamwork, or leadership skills; and
- personal development such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, or motivation.

Teachers and parents also commented on the personal development that had occurred for these young people over the course of 2002, and the practical skills they had acquired.

Both tangible outcomes such as qualifications and intangible outcomes such as personal development contributed to the young people feeling prepared to make the step from school. Some outcomes, such as practical vocational skills and aspects of communication skills, were recognised by students' qualifications. A number of teachers were concerned that other outcomes such as the full range of social and communication skills students developed or intangible outcomes such as personal development were not necessarily recognised by students' qualifications.

Practical skills

Nearly all (65: 88 percent) of the young people who were still at school at the end of 2002, and most (8: 78 percent) of those who had left during the year, considered that they had developed practical skills as a result of the work experience they were able to attend, from the practical activities they did at school, or from the learning experiences they had as part of their core classes.

Almost two-thirds (28: 64 percent) of their parents also talked about the practical skills their child had developed. These skills included vocational skills related to particular occupations, independent living skills, and work-related literacy and numeracy skills, as described below.

The practical skills the young people most commonly mentioned acquiring were vocational skills and knowledge that related to the subjects they were studying. A wide range of different areas were mentioned. Students on trades-related courses talked about the skills they had learnt that related to the trade they were studying, as well as the knowledge about health and safety they had acquired:

> I've learnt how to cook stuff that I didn't know how to cook before. I enjoyed cooking and at the same time eating it! The hygiene—where you clean your hands in hot soapy water ... Learning how to store the meat in the fridge… We had to cater for a couple of Asian people that came [to school] and we made cake and all different sorts of food. We enjoyed setting up the tables and putting on the [table] cloths. (Student end 2002)

Those who studied sports-related courses described the sports skills, coaching, health and safety, and planning skills they had learnt during their courses, and those studying business or tourism courses, or who did work experience in offices, talked about the business and computer skills they had developed:

> When we went out on Gateway, I got to do photocopying and filing. I worked on computers and I did Excel. We learnt it at school, and then I used it out there. (Student end 2002)

Some students also mentioned independent living skills they had gained from their core courses, such as budgeting, how to find a flat, or cooking and nutrition:

> The Independent Living course [covered] everything that you need in life—how to spend your money, how to budget, and how to cook—heaps of stuff. (Student end 2002)

Work-related literacy and numeracy skills

A number of students also described how they had developed work-related literacy and numeracy skills related to their main subject areas:

> Maths and English so you know how to use it if you want to make something or try to draw some plans. (Student end 2002)

A smaller number of students and parents talked about the knowledge and skills students had gained from core classes, such as mathematics, English or communication, or computing, and a few described the written communication skills they had acquired for writing CVs or completing application forms.

Social, communication, teamwork, and leadership skills

The majority of the students who were still at school at the end of 2002 (57: 77 percent) and those who had left during the year (15: 65 percent), considered that during 2002 they had developed better social, communication, teamwork, or leadership skills through their school-organised learning experiences:

> I learnt how to deal with customers in the tourism industry and know how to explain things to people in a way that they liked [for outdoor recreation]. (Student end 2002)

> When we first started there was a month of teamwork. [My skills improved] 'cause we were all mates and 'cause, I guess, we all worked in a team and if someone needed help we would all help, and they would hard-out encourage you… (Student end 2002)

> In this course everyone was a leader at different things. We learnt to mix and mingle with different types of people. (Student end 2002)

A number (19: 43 percent) of their parents also described how their child had improved their social skills:

> Her communication skills are better because she can mix with different people. She mixed with different people on work experience. She's opened up a bit more. (Parent end 2002)

> He teaches other kids in all sports. He's a good role model for other students. (Parent end 2002)

There were four aspects of their learning environment that the young people considered had assisted their development of these skills. These were opportunities they had to:

- interact with employers and customers while on work experience;
- learn about and practise social and communication skills in communications courses at school;
- engage in teamwork at school, or during work experience or off-site courses; and
- show leadership skills or do leadership courses at school. For example, a number of the courses, particularly those in sports-related areas, included leadership modules, or provided students with opportunities to lead groups or be role models for younger students.

Personal development

Most (61: 82 percent) of the young people who were at school at the end of 2002 and about half (12: 52 percent) of those who had left school during the year considered they had developed personally during the 2002 school year. Most of the parents we interviewed also thought this was the case (36: 82 percent). The interviewers in this study also observed a marked difference in the social confidence of many of the students between the beginning and the end of 2002.

Self-confidence and self-esteem

Around half of the students and their parents provided examples of how the students had, during 2002, developed more self-confidence, self-esteem, or understanding of themselves, as a result of their experiences at school. Some outlined how these increases in self-confidence had transferred into other areas of their lives:

> Work experience helped me to develop confidence in talking in class at school. (Student end 2002)

You can see the difference. She's more confident to give things a go. She's got the 'I can do it', approach. (Parent end 2002)

Students and their parents linked students' increased confidence to a number of aspects of their courses: the successes the young people had experienced with qualifications or as a result of real experiences such as work placements; the encouragement and support they received from teachers; and the opportunities they had to try out a range of different experiences and develop knowledge of their capabilities in these areas.

Motivation and independence

About half of the young people and about three-quarters of their parents described how the young people had become more motivated, independent, mature, or had developed more ability to self-direct during 2002:

I pushed myself harder. I set goals for myself. (Student end 2002)

He stayed after school, or got to school early, to finish off his work. He would never have done it before. (Parent end 2002)

The connection between relevance, success, and motivation

What was it about the courses that assisted students to develop these personal skills? Teachers described how the vocationally-focused courses offered different learning opportunities from traditional courses. For a number of students, these vocational courses were more relevant to their career goals, and were therefore more motivating than traditional subjects. Parents also discussed how the young people became more focused on their schoolwork, and more self-managing once they began to see the relevance of their study at school to their career goals:

She's got a goal and is able to achieve it. She's very motivated and applied for a supervisor's position at a supermarket. (Parent end 2002)

Vocational courses also recognise skills and attributes that had not been emphasised in traditional courses, for example, practical skills or leadership and teamwork. This gave students more scope to have successes at school. Teachers described the positive impact the experience of success had on some of the students in this study who had few similar experiences in relation to traditional learning activities.

I think they all gained in confidence as a result of doing this course. _____finished the course before she left [school] … and finished well, and she was shaking with anxiety prior to doing the boat-handling assessment where she goes on the water and shows what she can do… I think they all improved in confidence, it was all something that they would have had doubts about their ability to cope with, and they all coped with it… (Teacher end 2002)

Some of the young people and their parents also made explicit connections between experiences of success at school, increasing self-confidence and motivation, and improved achievement at school. This connection is also discussed in Chapter 10 in relation to qualifications:

> I'm more confident with certain things because I understand them more and because of that I feel more motivated to do things. (Student end 2002)

> She gained more in this year than she gained in the whole rest of her time at high school. Her achievement has improved and her attitude has changed. She has messy thoughts and now she's changed her thoughts into focus. She's thinking ahead. (Parent end 2002)

Were these skills and attributes useful once the young people left school?

When we followed the young people up in 2004 we asked them to identify any skills and attitudes they had acquired at school that had been useful to them once they left school.

Skills used post-school

Nearly all (56: 92 percent) of the young people, including some of those who left school during 2002, mentioned some skills they had developed that had been useful to them post-school. Those most commonly mentioned are shown in Table 29.

Table 29 **Skills learnt at school that were useful post-school (N=61)**

Skill area	N	%
Social and communication	37	61
Computer	34	56
Practical vocational skills in particular areas	19	31
Teamwork	12	20
Study skills	12	20
Leadership	10	16
Customer service	10	16
Written communication	10	16
CV development/job interviewing	7	11
Mathematics/numeracy	6	10
Career planning/researching	6	10
Knowledge about flatting and legal rights	3	5
First aid	3	5
Other	5	8
Did not learn any useful skills at school	5	8

Personal development that was useful post-school

About three-quarters (44: 72 percent) of the young people talked about how the personal development they gained at school has assisted them post-school. As shown in Table 30 most mentioned either the motivation or the self-confidence they had acquired. Similar to their comments at the end of 2002, a number of the young people connected these feelings of confidence to the way they were encouraged by their teachers and the successful learning experiences they had, in particular, as they were prepared for, or during, work experience placements.

Table 30 **Attitudes developed at school that were useful post-school (N=61)**

Attitudes	N	%
Motivation	33	54
Self-confidence/self-esteem/assertiveness/independence	33	54
Understanding of others	9	15
Other	3	5
Did not develop personally/not sure	17	28

The place of life skills in the curriculum

A report from the evaluation of the Youth Training and Training Opportunities programmes discusses the need for youth programmes to assist people to develop lifelong learning skills that enable them to "further their education and to find work and keep a job" (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 9). In the report from the second phase of this review it is suggested that youth programmes need to focus more closely on foundation skills such as literacy, numeracy, and communication skills (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Other commentators suggest that young people need more than these traditional foundation skills. Bryce and Withers (2003) consider that educational environments need to equip young people with a motivation towards learning, as well as the skills that will enable them to successfully engage in learning throughout their life. Gilbert (2005) suggests that the New Zealand education system needs to develop better ways of supporting young people to be problem solvers, redefiners of knowledge, and innovators.

There is an increasing awareness that traditional discipline or curriculum-based approaches do not capture the full range of educational outcomes necessary for young people's personal development and functioning in society. The OECD is developing a framework for conceptualising and assessing these outcomes, which they have called "key competencies". One of the foundations for the OECD concept of key competencies is an acknowledgement that young people need to develop more than the "foundation" or job-readiness skills deemed necessary by employers. Drawing together international understandings about the core skills and competencies

young people need to function in society the *Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations* (DeSeCo) project identifies three categories of key competencies as "indispensable prerequisites" necessary for individuals to have a successful life, and for society to be able to sustain socioeconomic development (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). These three categories are the ability to: interact in groups or teams; act autonomously; and use tools such as ICT interactively. Thinking skills (such as meta-cognition) are viewed as threading through these three competencies. The OECD definition of "competency" incorporates the knowledge, practical and cognitive skills, attitudes, emotions, values, and motivation necessary to complete a task.

The information collected from the young people in this study shows that at this point in time there appeared to be a match between what the courses were offering and what young people felt they needed once they left school. At school the young people had developed some of the attributes deemed desirable by the OECD (Rychen & Salganik, 2003) such as the ability to interact in groups or teams. The programmes had less emphasis on other attributes seen to be important by the OECD (Rychen & Salganik, 2003) and Gilbert (2005), such as meta-cognition, creative and innovative thinking, and learning to be your own boss. An analysis of students' longer-term plans showed that some wanted to own or run their own business. This suggests that these skills may become more important for the young people in the future.

Although these programmes did not necessarily cover all the attributes noted by the OECD, there is some evidence from other studies that suggests these programmes may be placing more emphasis on these attributes than academically-focused programmes. From a summary of some of the *Learning Curves* data on the evolving NCEA qualifications regime, Hipkins (2004) argues that "contextually-focused" or vocational courses (that are similar to the ones in this study) could be viewed as more aligned with the skills of the knowledge society than "traditional-discipline" or academic NCEA courses. This is because contextually-focused courses can offer students the opportunity to "do" in an authentic context, as well as "learn about" an area, and therefore offer more scope for young people to transfer their learning into different situations. Some of the evidence from this current study supports this view. The opportunities to "do", and in particular work placements, were the aspects of their courses these young people valued as key learning experiences. Whilst they were still at school they associated much of their personal and skill development with these experiences. Some noted that these opportunities to "do" had also supported them with the theory or "learn about" aspects of their courses. Once they left school the data show that many felt able to transfer the learning that had occurred for them into new work or tertiary study situations.

Key messages about life skills

Having a range of life skills and the confidence and motivation to action personal goals were skills and attributes the young people in this study considered supported them to function in new environments when they left school. The school staff in this study recognised this, and supporting young people to develop these skills and attributes was a key aim of the programmes.

The main types of skills that were both emphasised at school and used by the young people post-school were: social, communication, and teamwork; practical vocational; computer; and study skills. The main personal attributes the young people further developed at school, and used once they left, were improved self-esteem and confidence and motivation.

The programmes offered a variety of different learning experiences designed to support students' to develop these skills and attributes including: work placements and practical school-based learning opportunities; leadership modules; and core classes which covered areas such as social and communication skills, and skills for living. The young people described how all of these opportunities had supported them to develop life skills. Particularly important were the opportunities they had to engage in practical and relevant learning experiences such as work experience.

The young people's comments about the outcomes from their courses lend support to the view suggested by Hipkins (2004) that some vocational courses may be more aligned with the skills of the knowledge society, than mainstream academic-focused NCEA courses. Through opportunities to "learn about" as well as "do" in an authentic context these young people were able to develop a range of attributes and transfer their learning to new areas once they left school. The data also suggest these young people would have welcomed more opportunities to "do".

Some of the skills and attributes emphasised by Gilbert (2005) as important for young people to develop in order to function in the knowledge society, such as creative thinking or being your own boss, were not mentioned by many of the young people either whilst they were at school or post-school. Their longer-term plans showed that they may need these skills in the future. Commentators suggest that young people need more opportunities to develop these attributes so that they have all the skills they need to function in a flexible and fast changing working environment (Gilbert, 2005; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). This indicates that a broadening of the definition of foundation skills to incorporate the key competencies framework (Ministry of Education, 2005b) may be necessary to better support young people for the future.

Finding more ways to formally recognise students' development of the full range of skills and attributes they are developing could also give students a better understanding of the range of competencies they possess which could be useful to them post-school. As teachers commented, and as is noted in other research (Boyd et al., 2005), some of these outcomes, especially the more intangible ones, are not currently fully recognised within the current NCEA qualification

structure. This study, and others (Bye, 2001), suggests that placing a more equal value on these attributes could also have a positive impact on retention.

12. Key messages from Innovative Pathways from School

Key aspects of effective careers and transition support

In the seven schools, careers and transition support (that is, information, advice, guidance, and career development activities) was embedded into the fabric of students' programmes of study. The embedded nature of this support created a relationship, experiences, and information web around students, the elements of which supported each other.

To create this web, all of the schools had designed courses that offered new experiences to students and provided careers and transition support in a wide range of formats. In terms of these different experiences and support, there was no one fit for all. But within the web there were seven main aspects to their school experiences that supported the young people to stay at school and in their transition from school. These are summarised below.

1) Offering a relevant curriculum to create positive attitudes towards school

Prior to their entry to the programmes, many of the young people appeared to be alienated from a school system that they had not experienced success in and that they perceived valued a curriculum that they did not regard as relevant to their interests or future plans. Most of those who stayed at school for the full 2002 year experienced a dramatic turnaround in their attitudes towards school. Having a positive attitude towards school supported students' retention and transition from school. Those who had positive attitudes were more likely to stay at school longer, have higher attendance rates, and gain more qualifications. These students felt more prepared for life outside school than their counterparts with less positive attitudes. Having a positive attitude to school is linked to a sense of connectedness to school. This suggests that these attitude changes could support a broader range of positive outcomes for these young people, given that research suggests that connectedness to school is a preventative factor against behaviours such as suicide and drug dependency (Resnick et al., 1997).

These attitude changes were influenced by a number of factors. Particularly important were students' perceptions of improved relationships with teachers in comparison to past years (discussed below). Another key factor was that students perceived the vocational courses they

were studying to be different and more motivating than past subjects as they offered: a practical curriculum that was perceived as relevant; work experience and other opportunities to learn by "doing", and the opportunity for students to experience academic success and pass qualifications. For some students, the integration of core literacy and numeracy classes with vocational subjects, and improved relationship with their peers was also important.

2) The use of student-centred pedagogies to build relationships

The most commonly mentioned reason for students' attitude changes was improved relationships with teachers. The data suggest that the practices used by teachers, and the nature of the relationship building that resulted within these programmes, differed in nature from that which occurred in mainstream classes within the same school. The whānau or family-orientated approach that underpinned the programmes, with one key teacher having responsibility for a class group for more than a standard subject allocation, supported teachers to build a relationship web around students.

Teachers', students', and parents' reflections on teachers' behaviours suggest that teachers made substantial use of student-centred pedagogies. These teachers had high expectations of students, reframed their interactions with students as a dialogue between adults, worked to create a sense of respect and whānau in their classes, provided mentoring and pastoral care, planned learning activities based on students' interests, and carefully scaffolded learning situations to ensure that students had the opportunity to develop teamwork and leadership skills and experienced academic and social successes. These practices provided a safety net for many students that enabled them to feel included and connected to school, and offered them an individualised experience that contributed to their retention at school, and which supported them to gain qualifications and make plans for their future. These findings about the pedagogies and learning activities that engage students resonate with those from other recent studies of secondary education (Bishop et al., 2003; Boyd et al., 2005).

3) Access to careers and transition support

Another reason why the young people felt prepared for life outside school was because of the access they had to careers and transition information, advice, and support to assist their decision making. Students received careers and transition support from most of the people they came into contact with at school or outside school. Family members and friends played a key role in supporting young people's career decision making. But in retrospect, the young people had found the advice and support they received from family members to be less useful than the support they accessed through school. This study gives some indication of the extra role the teachers and careers staff from low-decile schools play in supporting young people and in encouraging them to step outside the frames of reference of their families.

Transition support was provided by both subject teachers and careers staff, and was integrated into the curriculum and offered in an ongoing way to class groups and individuals. The provision of this support was facilitated by the whānau approach of the programmes, which enabled teachers to more easily organise whole-class activities and off-site visits and develop a detailed knowledge about individuals' interests.

The relationship, information, and experiences web offered most of the young people access to a wide range of information sources, advice, and personal support. Most common were: the provision of text-based information such as leaflets about jobs, tertiary handbooks, or access to websites; talks from tertiary or industry visitors; work placements or attendance at tertiary taster courses; visits to tertiary institutions and career expos; the completion of career planning exercises; and individualised discussions and mentoring. Most of the different types of support were useful to some, indicating a need for schools to offer a diverse range of information and activities. In particular, students valued the support that was related to their interests.

Some types of support, and aspects of the way it was provided, were mentioned as particularly beneficial. The young people highly valued opportunities to have "real" experiences of their interests and the assistance offered by school staff, and in particular, their subject teachers. In a paper outlining some of the preliminary findings of the OECD career guidance policy review, Watts (2002) writes that it is not enough to just present career information; having someone to discuss this with enables young people to make personal sense of this information:

> …the *necessity* of making good information available to all is not in question: the Internet is increasingly providing a means of doing so. But the issue is whether this is sufficient. For career information to be of value, individuals need to be able to act upon it. This assumes they are able to find it, understand it, relate it to their needs, and convert it into personal action. We need to know much more about the dynamics of this process, but from what we know at present, it seems like the availability of human mediation is crucial for many people (Watts, 2002, pp. 4–5).

Watts suggested that a successful strategy for working with at-risk young people is a highly individualised approach, which focuses on young people's personal, social, educational, and vocational needs.

The strategy suggested by Watts was essentially that used by the subject teachers. Teachers acted as career and course brokers, and across schools, had evolved a similar approach to providing formal and informal transition support that was an extension of their student-centred practices. This approach was characterised by a focus on the whole person, the provision of support that was tailored to students' interests and integrated into the curriculum, the combining of information provision with "real" experiences that assisted students to explore their options, individual advising and life coaching in class-time, and discussions that were handled in an honest manner and which assisted the young people to "unpack" the information they had, evaluate their options, and make choices. This approach extends a "straightforward" approach to career counselling that

is described by Krei and Rosenbaum (2001) as successful in supporting students who are grappling with a range of post-secondary choices that do not necessarily include university.

4) Learning by doing: Providing "real" experiences

Most of the schools provided opportunities for students to explore their career options through a choice of work experience placements, content areas, block tertiary courses, Gateway, STAR taster courses, or foundation courses. These "hands-on" learning experiences were the form of transition support that the young people found the most beneficial and were another key factor responsible for their change in attitudes towards school.

One of the reasons work experience placements (and practical tertiary courses similar to work experience) were regarded so highly was because they allowed students to explore their likes and dislikes in a hands-on fashion. They also provided opportunities for students to find a match between their interests and situation and possible career pathways, and find out more about the worlds of work and tertiary study. Many of these experiences connected students with a range of people in industry or tertiary providers whom they could draw on for information, advice, and in some cases future employment. They also provided opportunities for young people to experience success, gain confidence, develop vocational and social skills, and gain qualifications. Trying out the "theory" they learnt at school in the workplace functioned to re-engage some with school as the connections between schoolwork and career plans became more transparent.

This and other studies, suggest that career and course tasters can be very beneficial for young people (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004, Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003). Vaughan and Kenneally (2003) note that a significant portion of school STAR funding is used for tasters, and that these tasters were very popular as they enabled students to eliminate certain career options and gain information before making consequential decisions. Some of the *Youth Pathways*[37] career consultants suggested that the pathways model that underpins current career planning models encourages young people to start on a training pathway that leads to early specialisation and high costs (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004). These consultants supported career and course taster systems as they believed young people's interests would be better served by being able to explore a range of potential careers.

The way that post-school work and study experiences further shaped the young people's plans, suggests that providing as many opportunities as possible for young people to explore a range of options, whilst they are still at school and are therefore able to change their mind in a low-stakes environment, can support young people as they make the step from school.

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[37] *Youth Pathways* was a pilot Career Services initiative for at-risk youth. This pilot offered young people 3–6 months of careers and transition support.

Wyn and Dwyer (1999) suggest that there has been a crumbling of the "bridges" between childhood and adulthood, such as a withdrawal of the support provided to young people and an increase in the costs of education and training. For the young people in this study, career exploration opportunities recreated some of these bridges. Courses that allowed young people to explore multiple options provided a safety net for students, as if they decided they were not interested in one option, they still had other areas they could focus on. Teachers considered that exploration activities were especially important for those who did not have tertiary role models or who came from low-income families.

5) Bridges to the tertiary environment

National data suggest that people who complete tertiary study will be better off financially in the longer term than those who do not (Ministry of Education, 2005a). Acknowledging this, some of the schools had developed effective bridges between school and the tertiary environment. Qualification and curriculum alignment between schools and tertiary providers made tertiary pathways more transparent to the young people. School staff also made connections with tertiary providers that went further than one-off visits to tertiary institutions. These connections were designed to support the young people to develop real relationships with people in their areas of interest or with those who could provide support once they entered tertiary institutions. Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programmes also functioned to connect some of the young people with the tertiary environment. A number were assisted by school staff to gain apprenticeships, most of which incorporated a training package.

The discussions young people had with school staff supported the young people to act on their aspirations. Staff gave them information about the pathways available to higher qualifications, and assisted them to make the "right" decisions according to their situation and interests. Although many tended not to follow through on all of the details of their study plans, setting some form of concrete tertiary study plan at school, so aspects could be followed through on leaving school, appeared to be one way of encouraging tertiary participation. Directly supporting young people to take action on their plans before they left school also encouraged tertiary participation. One example of this was assisting students to complete enrolment forms.

Some of the teachers encouraged students to go to preferred providers (often polytechnics); others organised visits to a range of providers so students could explore their options. Both these approaches were beneficial for some. Although many of the young people did study with the schools' preferred providers, others also studied with alternative providers (mostly PTEs).

Some teachers did not encourage students to go to PTEs or provide much information about these institutions. In some cases this was due to a belief that they should be encouraging students towards an option perceived to be of higher status. Some of the young people who started tertiary study at polytechnics or universities in the first year after they left school had started, or were

planning, to continue their study to higher levels. This tertiary staircasing was not evident for those who did not study in their first year, or who initially started out studying at PTEs. National data also show that students who study at PTEs have lower progression rates (Ministry of Education, 2004). One explanation for this pattern relates to the characteristics of the young people who study at these two types of institutions. Those with higher qualifications tended not to study at PTEs. Another explanation is that these young people had access to less information about qualifications and pathways. The data from this study showed that those who studied at PTEs appeared to be less well informed about the qualifications they were gaining and the steps towards higher qualifications. Given that students from low-decile schools are more likely to go to PTEs, this indicates a need for school staff to assist students to access information on the full range of options to ensure they are fully informed. This also indicates a need for young people who study at tertiary institutions to be provided with more information about qualifications and the pathways they are supporting.

6) Opportunities to gain qualifications

Gaining qualifications was very important to the young people. Prior to their entry into the programmes a substantial number had low or no qualifications, and did not consider they had achieved particularly well. By the end of 2002 most of the young people who stayed at school had gained enough qualifications to remove them from the low or no qualifications categories, and their perceptions of their achievement had become more positive.

For many of the young people, success bred success. The internal and self-paced nature of unit standard assessments, along with teacher approaches that ensured students had successes early in the year, led to increased academic confidence which contributed to increased confidence to participate at school.

One challenge for the schools was achieving a balance between providing activities related to students' interests, while also providing students with qualifications. Some offered National Certificates or locally-developed certificates that linked to tertiary providers or apprenticeship schemes. Others offered collections of unit standards related to students' particular interests.

The data indicated that offering students the reality of gaining a full qualification, and in particular, one with a recognised pathway, was more beneficial for the young people, both in the short and longer term, than offering individualised clusters of unit standards. Those who gained a full certificate were the most satisfied with their school experiences. These young people had a clearer overall picture of their achievements and future plans. They were more knowledgeable about the qualification environment, had developed firmer tertiary study plans, and tended to act on these plans. Offering students the reality of gaining more than one certificate, thereby increasing the choices open to them post-school, was also beneficial.

The data also showed gaps in students' and parents' understanding of the qualifications environment. Some did not have a "big picture" view about assessments, and did not appear to know about their link to full qualifications or the pathways they supported. Having this "big picture" appeared to motivate students to complete a full qualification and supported their post-school decision making.

Designing NCEA courses to support transition

Since this study was initiated, NCEA has been fully implemented in the senior secondary school. NCEA offers schools the potential to design courses that relate to student needs and interests and that support students' transition from school. Recent data indicate that NCEA is having an impact on students' transition. The latest Ministry of Education Annual Report (2005c) notes that overall, the number of school leavers with no qualifications has dropped since the introduction of NCEA and in 2004, 32 percent of school leavers gained at least one entrance qualification that would allow them to go directly into tertiary study at degree level. This was a 19 percent increase from 2002.

Although it appears that more "at-risk" students are now able to gain qualifications as a result of the implementation of NCEA, a recent report from NZQA (2006) shows that some students still do not have the "big picture" about their qualifications, especially in relation to the completion of certificates.

This suggests that many of the ideas contained in this report about maximising the impact of programmes are still valid within the new NCEA environment. An example of a recent approach that aligns with those suggested in this report is that taken by Town School E as described in the *Learning Curves* study (Hipkins et al., 2005). This school had developed a programme centred around multiple National Certificates. NCEA was viewed as one of the National Certificates it was possible for young people to obtain.

7) Opportunities to develop life skills

The students, parents, and school staff in this study all valued a broad range of outcomes from schooling. Along with qualifications, increased confidence and motivation, and the development of social, communication, teamwork, computer, study, and practical vocational skills stood out as being key outcomes. The emphasis placed on life skills varied between programmes. Some focused almost solely on the development of a range of life or foundation skills, and others emphasised both life skills and qualifications. The data from this study suggest that programmes with a dual focus were more successful in supporting students' initial transition from school.

Bye (2001) states that a key policy imperative is to allow for the development of flexible programmes. She suggests that this flexibility can be seen to be the freedom to pursue a range of outcomes—academic, vocational, and social—and that doing so could have a positive impact on

early school leaving and alienation from school. Similar points about broadening the scope of qualifications to value a broader range of outcomes have been noted in other studies that examine student engagement (Boyd et al., 2005; Hawk & Hill, 1996). The evidence from this study supports this argument—many of the young people were alienated from the academically-focused programmes they studied in Years 9–11 and were engaged with the courses that offered the opportunity to work towards vocational or social as well as academic outcomes, that they studied in Years 12–13.

But what social outcomes, life skills, or competencies should we value? Some commentators consider that the conceptualisation of these skills needs to be broadened from the traditional focus on "foundation" or job-readiness skills to encompass the skills needed in the knowledge society such as problem solving, redefining knowledge, and innovating (Gilbert, 2005). For the young people in this study, traditional foundation skills seemed to be those that were most recognised and used post-school. There was also evidence to indicate that they had developed, and were using, some of the skills needed in the knowledge society such as teamwork and leadership skills.

The programmes offered a range of learning experiences designed to support a range of outcomes. In particular, the opportunities the young people had to learn by "doing" assisted them to develop skills and transfer these to new areas once they left school. This information supports research which suggests that some vocational courses may be more aligned with knowledge society skills than mainstream academic NCEA courses if they offer young people the opportunity to "learn about" as well as "do" in authentic situations and thus transfer their learning (Hipkins, 2004).

The data also suggest the young people would have welcomed more opportunities to learn by "doing", and analysis of their longer-term plans, particularly for those who intended to become their own boss or manage a business, suggests that in the future they may require skills that are more in line with those used in a knowledge society. The Key Competencies proposed in the current curriculum stocktake[38] provide a useful overview of attributes that schools could focus on to align expected outcomes with the requirements of the knowledge society.

Looking to the future: Planning programmes to support students

Balancing the tension between supporting short- or longer-term goals

Smith (1999) suggests that career advisors have two key functions: to provide high-quality information; and to educate individuals to use this information to self-manage their own careers. The careers and transition support offered by teachers in this study tended to be orientated

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[38]   http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/whats_happening/key_competencies_e.php

towards the first function suggested by Smith (1999), that is, offering students information to support the short-term goal of making the first step from school. All schools also offered career planning activities designed to fulfil the second, longer-term function suggested by Smith, but an emphasis on next-steps and short-term goals predominated. In addition, teachers had developed a third function: providing the young people with emotional support and assistance to unpack their options.

Much of the transition support offered by school staff was geared towards assisting students to develop next-step plans. Having a firm plan was an important form of transition support. The evidence from this study indicates that, although many of the young people later changed aspects of their plans, those who developed a firm plan were more likely to act on aspects of it.

As the global labour market changes it is likely that many young people may be required to refocus their plans a number of times during their life. This refocusing was already evident for a number who had changed aspects of their work or study plans. But the data collected in 2004 showed that not many had accessed new career information once they had left school or recognised that the activities they engaged in at school were designed to teach them a planning process. Some were still relying on the information they gained, or the plans developed, at school. Others appeared "stuck" as their first option had not worked out.

The difficulties of achieving a balance between short- and long-term goals was also observed in the evaluation of *Youth Pathways* (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004). The career consultants in this study tried to emphasise to the young people that they were learning a life planning process, but interviews with clients indicated that a number did not perceive the planning activities they were engaged in as a skill they were learning for the future and were more comfortable with a "next-steps" approach. They seemed reliant on their consultant for assistance with future decision making.

One reason why the young people in this current study and in *Youth Pathways* (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004) were likely to be more focused on short-term goals is that they were attempting to deal with the here and now of their lives. Another reason could be that the models of career planning that are presented are premised on the idea that young people have choices. In 2004 this did not seem to be the reality of the work "decisions" some of the young people in this study were making. Some were entering the labour market through a planned or premeditated move in a direction related to their interests, but others were in need of money to finance their life or study and were taking any job that was offered.

It is clear from the experiences of the young people in this study, *Youth Pathways*, and in other studies (Prideaux, 2003), that there is a need to shift the focus of school-based career education programmes from a short-term information provision focus to include a longer-term emphasis on providing students with the opportunity to learn career process skills. The transition literature suggests these skills need to be related to the realities of the transition environment as young

people experience it. The current environment is characterised by a decrease in the demand for unskilled workers and an increase in youth unemployment, an increased need for constant upskilling, increased growth in the range of tertiary study options and institutions, increased demand for higher education, and an increase in the flexibility of work arrangements (Vaughan & Boyd, 2005). Carpenter and Inkson (1999) argue that in this environment, young people need to be flexible, versatile rather than specialised, have the ability to "improvise" rather than "plan" their career, and accept personal responsibility for their career rather than vest it in any one organisation or institution. Similar characteristics are mentioned by Patton (2001) in a discussion about career education services and practices in Australia.

This all points to a need for young people to leave school with the skills necessary to make and adjust plans, access new information, and evaluate a range of options. Research suggests that a life-planning rather than career-planning approach is well-suited to young people's reality. This approach is viewed as better meeting young people's needs as it allows them to focus on other aspects of their lives that are important to them such as social goals and leisure interests (Dwyer, Smith, Tyler, & Wyn, 2003; Vaughan & Boyd, 2004). Schools are in a better position than post-school agencies to support young people to develop life and career process skills given that they have longer timeframes to work with students.

Benefits and drawbacks of a directive approach

As well as suggesting options related to students' interests and organising their access to career research resources, some of the teachers used more directive approaches to supporting students' transition. Examples of this were filtering the plethora of study options available to students and encouraging them to go to preferred tertiary providers that had "worked" either academically or financially for past students, or making connections with employers to set students up with apprenticeships or jobs. For some of the young people, it was clear that these more directive approaches had longer-term benefits. In particular a number had been assisted by school staff to gain apprenticeships or to complete complex job application, course enrolment, or scholarship forms.

Long-term benefits of similar approaches to supporting students to find employment have been noted. Rosenbaum, DeLuca, Miller, and Roy (1999) conducted a study in the USA on the influence of personal and institutional contacts on labour market outcomes. They found, nine years later, that students from minority groups who got help from school or relatives in finding their first job, had a better income than those who found their first job through government employment agencies or their friends. Rosenbaum et al. suggest one of the reasons for this could be that the work contacts that relatives or teachers have may provide students with jobs that have better career trajectories that therefore enable students to avoid "dead-end" jobs. Rosenbaum et al. suggest that, given the long-term benefits, it is timely to look at policies that give teachers time and incentives to actively assist disadvantaged groups of students to find employment.

The downside of the directive approaches described above is that students are not necessarily supported to develop career process and job research skills for themselves. This also suggests a need for schools to examine the balance between supporting students with next-steps whilst also emphasising longer-term process skills.

Improving retention: Teaching life/career planning models earlier

Prior to 2002 many of the young people could not see the relevance of the courses they were doing to their interests or future plans. Throughout 2002 many still struggled to see the relevance of core literacy and numeracy classes to their future goals. Gaps in students' knowledge about school qualifications and the tertiary options available to them were also evident. Similar gaps in knowledge about tertiary options and their related career pathways have been reported in a case study of a Years 12 and 13 initiative to encourage students from a low-decile school to continue to university science careers (Boyd et al., 2005).

In this study, some of the young people benefited from having a "big picture" overview about their qualifications and future options. For some, being assisted to develop this overview in 2002 supported them to stay at school, complete qualifications, and engage with the literacy and numeracy aspects of their courses. Some who did not have this overview left school during 2002 or tended not to complete the literacy and numeracy aspects of their course. By 2004 some had come to see the relevance of core literacy and numeracy skills to their current situation.

One way of giving students the "big picture" is to increase the focus on career and life planning in the junior secondary school (Boyd et al., 2001). Teaching life/career planning models earlier, and offering the associated careers and transition support and "real" experience of options, could counteract some of the dissatisfaction expressed about subjects perceived to be irrelevant, and support students to make better-informed subject choices. These activities could also give teachers information about the interests of their class that could be incorporated into their programmes, thereby increasing their relevance.

Life planning models could also be offered alongside curriculum activities that support young people to recognise and develop strategies to cope with or balance the range of potential experiences they might have related to work, education, social interactions, personal or family health, family dynamics, recreational interests, and community activities.

Has the "new worker" replaced the "old worker"?

Research indicates that the "new workers" of today are likely to go through a protracted period of trialling different options, indicating a need to move away from conceptions of the "old worker" and associated linear models of transition (Bye, 2001; Higgins, 2002). As many young people may be unlikely to find set career pathways such as those that existed in the past, the career

literature suggests that the kind of guidance and support needed for the future should fit within a non-linear framework.

In this study, there were two main groups of young people. The first group, the "planners", had, by the time they left school, developed ideas of the pathways they would like to explore and had made some concrete steps towards acting on their plans. This group contained the young people who were doing apprenticeships or working in trades and those who were studying for higher certificates at tertiary institutions. For a number of these young people the conception of the "old worker" was still valid. The second group, the "explorers" or "new workers", comprised those who were undecided about their future or who were exploring a range of career options or ways of organising their life.

The transition environment poses a challenge for school staff, tertiary course developers, and policy makers in designing programmes for these two groups. How do you provide a flexible system that keeps members of both groups attached in some way to the formal education system, whilst also acknowledging that any of these young people may change their focus a number of times during their life?

School staff lived with the tension between the needs of these two groups, and found different solutions. A number of the schools used a pathways model that formalised the connections between school courses and employers or tertiary providers. This type of staircasing was very effective for the "planners", but not so effective for the "explorers". Other schools offered fewer formalised pathways, and instead had developed models that maximised student-driven exploration of options. These models could be very helpful for some of the "explorers", but did not necessarily offer them all the things they needed to feel prepared to make the transition from school, such as recognised qualifications with clear pathways.

Some teachers balanced this tension by trying to incorporate both models into their programmes; for example, by providing as many choices as possible within a pathways model. This study suggests that this approach, which enabled conceptions of the "old worker" to co-exist alongside those of the "new worker", appeared to be most successful in supporting the young people as they made the transition from school.

In the tertiary sector there are a number of initiatives, such as Modern Apprenticeships and university foundation course, which appear to be addressing the needs of the "planners". The "explorers" appear to be less well served—and it is this group that provides the policy and practice challenge. Left to their own devices some of these young people feel overwhelmed by their circumstances; others try out many different occupations and courses. This could be very financially costly for them, and could be a contributing factor to the high student debt observed in this country.

Drawing on the data from this study, it seems that some of the needs of the "explorers" could be served by ensuring that courses in the tertiary sector offer enough support to "at-risk" young

people to stay in the system. Some current programmes such as the Conservation Corps (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) and youth training (funded by TEC) offer students low-cost options that keep them in the education system and potentially act as a stepping stone into other tertiary courses. The potential of these and other courses could be maximised by offering ample opportunities for low-cost experiential career and course tasting. In the tertiary sector, many tasters are in the form of bridging or foundation courses. Some enable students to try out more than one area; but most "pathway" young people towards a single institution or destination. There appears to be scope in this sector to offer formal trans-institution career exploration courses that do not require young people to specialise early. These courses would have a number of functions: they could keep young people engaged within the education system and gaining qualifications; they could provide ongoing access to mentors; and they could offer young people further opportunities to develop their interests as well as life and career planning skills.

Final summary: Preparing "at-risk" young people for the transition from school

In exploring the experience of students who were perceived to be "at-risk" as they made the transition from school, this study examined these young people's experiences of senior secondary school as a whole, and by doing so, addressed two key educational concerns: What encourages students who are disenchanted with the education system to re-engage, stay at school, and achieve? And, What school experiences support young people to feel prepared for the transition from school?

The young people had answers to these questions. Each aspect of the educational and careers and transition support that they described was important in itself, but it was the interplay between areas that created the relationship, experiences, and information web that supported them both at school and as they left school. Key aspects of this web were:

- the whānau approach used to structure the programmes and teachers' use of student-centred pedagogies which resulted in teachers forging strong relationships with students and offering pastoral care and emotional support;
- teachers' "straightforward" approaches to mentoring students and providing careers and transition support relating to a range of options;
- the way the courses were designed to offer practical learning opportunities related to students' interests and local employment and study options;
- the way the courses allowed students to work towards a mix of academic, social, and vocational outcomes;
- the way information provision was offered alongside real experiences of options;
- the development of bridges to the tertiary environment; and
- the use of qualifications to provide a range of pathways to tertiary study or employment.

The school staff in this study exerted a greater influence on students' post-school choices than that which is reported in other studies (Andres, 2003; Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). This suggests that these supports are more important for students from low-decile schools whose family frames of reference may not include tertiary study or a broad range of occupation types.

Although many of the students appeared to be offered a substantial amount of careers and transition support, it is also clear from this and other studies that young people who are "at-risk" benefit from being offered more assistance than may be currently available to them. This study provides suggestions for designing school, youth, and transition programmes to ensure they provide the type of support young people need to enter the post-school environment. In particular, these young people need:

- programmes designed to relate to their interests and which offer a range of pathways and potential outcomes;
- ongoing access to mentors; and
- assistance to see how the career planning activities engaged in at school are teaching them a process to use in the future to self-manage their lives and careers.

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Appendix A: Innovative Pathways Programme Leader/Teacher Interview – End of 2002

The Programme

I will begin by asking you how the PROGRAMME has gone this year.

1a) Overall, how well do you think the PROGRAMME has gone this year?

1b) How has the year gone in terms of students getting qualifications? *(Prompt: full certificates/unit stds?)*

1c) What have been the highlights of the year in the PROGRAMME?

1d) Were there other things that went well? Yes / No

1e) Were there things that did not go so well?   Yes / No

Changes to the Programme

I am now going to ask you some questions about the changes that have been made to the programme since last year, and any future changes that are planned.

2)   When I interviewed you at the beginning of the year we talked about the changes you were planning to make to this year's programme. Could you tell if you went ahead and made these changes and, if so, how they went? *(Prompt with the specific changes mentioned in the first interview. These will differ from school to school.)*

3)   Did you make any other changes to the programme this year?   Yes / No

   (If Yes) Could you tell me about these changes and their effect on the programme?

4)   Do you have plans to make any changes to the programme for next year? Yes / No

   (If Yes) Please describe these changes and the reasons for them.

5) At the beginning of the year we asked about the impact you thought the NCEA might have on PROGRAMME. Now that the implementation of the NCEA will soon be starting for Year 12, do you have any further comments to make about its potential impact on the programme you are running?

   Yes / No *(If Yes)* Please describe.

The students in the Programme

I am now going to ask you about the particular needs of the students who join PROGRAMME and how these are catered for.

6) Are there any aspects of the programme that cater for Maori or Pacific students in particular? Yes / No *(Prompt for aspects and how they cater Maori/Pacific students)*

7) Do the students in PROGRAMME have any particular needs that are different from the students in the mainstream?   Yes / No
   (If yes) Please explain.

8a) One of the themes that is emerging from this study is the importance of the relationships that are built between the programme teachers and their students. What do you see as being important in terms of the relationship building that goes on in PROGRAMME?

8b) To what extent is the relationship building that occurs in PROGRAMME dependent on the structure and timetable of the programme? (for example, a structure in which the students stay together for longer periods of time as a class, are in smaller classes, etc)

8c) Could the level of relationship building you maintain in PROGRAMME be achieved in the mainstream?   Yes / No

   Please explain.

9) Another issue that has emerged is the question of whether being in the PROGRAMME cuts off students other subject options. Could you comment on this from your perspective?

Student destinations and transition

I am now going to ask you about the support you have provided to students in making choices about their futures.

10) Could you describe all the ways, both formal and informal, in which you have supported students in making choices, about jobs or courses, for next year?

   a) Providing support, advice, or information in a whole-class teaching situation.

b) Providing support, advice, or information in a one-to-one situation.

c) Organising on-the-job training or workplace experience.

d) Organising visits to polytechnics, universities, training organisations/PTEs, workplaces.

e) Organising visiting speakers from polytechnics, universities, training organisations/ PTEs, employers, ITOs.

f) Organising visits to career expos.

g) Showing students how to access sources of career information such as Careerpoint telephone careers information, or websites such as The Quest database and KiwiCareers internet website.

h) Providing printed material such as pamphlets or handbooks put out by polytechnics or universities.

i) Any other ways, for example, communicating with parents about career possibilities and courses, or setting up mentoring programmes for students.

11) Are there any other forms of transition support that the students in PROGRAMME have received this year, for example, from the school careers staff or employers?

12) Of all the forms of support that we have just talked about, which do you consider to be most useful in helping students make choices about their future?

The students in the study

I am now going to ask you about how you think the year has gone for the students that you teach.

13) Here is a list of the students in the study that you teach. *(Provide list.)* Could you tell me how you think the year has gone for each of these students and the ways in which you have assisted them in developing their career plans?

   (Prompt: Have you noticed any changes in the students' attitudes, behaviours, achievements, and sense of direction?)

14) This is the last question in the interview. Is there anything else you would like to say about PROGRAMME?

Appendix B: Innovative Pathways Student Interview – End of 2002: Still at School

Study programme this year (2002)

First I'll ask you some questions about what you did this year at school, and what you got out of being in PROGRAMME this year.

1)   What school courses and subjects did you do this year? *(Prompt for PROGRAMME courses, and other school subjects.)*

   a) Programme

   b) Mainstream/Other school subjects

Outcomes

2)   What did you get out of doing PROGRAMME this year? Did you get any qualifications, skills, or personal development from your course(s)? *(Ask as general question first, then prompt for **all** areas not mentioned below.)*

   ☐ *a) Qualifications (e.g., Unit Stds, National Certificate, Achievement Stds, other)*
   ☐ *b) Practical skills*
   ☐ *c) Work experience or knowledge of the workplace*
   ☐ *d) Communication or social skills*
   ☐ *e) Motivation, personal development, self-esteem, or attitude changes*
   ☐ *f) Career goals/part-time or full-time jobs/apprenticeship*
   ☐ *g) Other*

3a)   Do you know if the qualifications you got this year lead to a further qualification, after you leave school, at Polytech or another organisation? *(Prompt: Is this the start of a Certificate that you can continue at Polytech?)*
   1) Yes   2) No (goto q4)   3) Not sure (goto q4)

3b)   *(If yes)* Could you describe how that works?

Opinions of school

I am now going to ask you some questions about what you thought of school this year.

4)   How motivated did you feel by school (including PROGRAMME) this year?
(Read out)
1) A lot   2) Quite a bit   3) A bit   4) Not much   5) Not much at all

5a)   How much did you like school (including PROGRAMME) this year? *(Read out)*
1) A lot   2) Quite a bit   3) A bit   4) Not much   5) Not much at all

5b)   Have your feelings about school changed since last year (2001)?
1) Yes – positive change   2) Yes – negative change   3) No (goto q6a)

5c)   *(If yes)* What caused your feelings about school to change?

6a)   Did you find PROGRAMME different from other courses or subjects you have done at school?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q7a)   3) Not sure (goto q7a)

6b)   *(If yes)* What was different? ***Write answer** and tick as many as needed.)*

☐ a) Things related to work experience
☐ b) Non-school provider or off-site learning (e.g., polytechnic/PTE/trips)
☐ c) Get on well with teachers/treated like adult
☐ d) Get on well with students/work as a team
☐ e) Wear mufti
☐ f) Subject is more motivating/student works harder than last year
☐ g) Subject/content is new
☐ h) Subject is more practical/hands-on
☐ i) Subject is related to personal plans/interests
☐ j) Subject is more fun/interesting/enjoyable
☐ k) Work is easier
☐ l) Work is harder
☐ m) More independent learning environment/work at own pace
☐ n) More flexibility/choice
☐ o) Spend more time on core subjects/compulsory subjects
☐ p) Structure of the day is different/stay together as class
☐ q) Assessment style is different (e.g., no tests, Unit Stds, Nat Certs)
☐ r) Other _____

7a)   Do you think doing PROGRAMME helped to keep you at school?
1) Yes-major factor 2) Yes-minor factor   3) No (goto q8) 4) Not sure (goto q8)

7b)   *(If yes)* What was it about PROGRAMME that kept you at school?

8) What were the things about PROGRAMME, or the teachers running it, that you liked the **most**? *(**Write answer** and tick as many as needed.)*

☐ a) Nothing
☐ b) Work experience
☐ c) Non-school provider or off-site learning (e.g., polytechnic/PTE)
☐ d) Getting on with other students/being with friends
☐ e) Teachers/better relationships with teachers/treated like adult
☐ f) Getting on with people in the workplace
☐ g) Wearing mufti
☐ h) Subject is more motivating/student works harder than last year
☐ i) Subject/content is new
☐ j) Subject is more practical/hands-on
☐ k) Subject is related to personal plans/interests
☐ l) Subject is more fun/interesting/enjoyable
☐ m) More flexibility/choice of subjects/content
☐ n) Work is easier
☐ o) Assessment type (e.g., no tests, Unit Stds)
☐ p) More independent learning environment/work at own pace
☐ q) Structure of the day is different/stay together as class
☐ r) Learning/getting qualifications
☐ s) Other _____

9) Could you tell me what the highlights of your year in PROGRAMME were?

10) What were the things about PROGRAMME that you liked the **least?** *(**Write answer** and tick as many as needed.)*

☐ a) Nothing
☐ b) Problems with peers/bullying
☐ c) Other students misbehaving/distracting
☐ d) Feeling shy/new at start of year (at school or off-site)
☐ e) Work experience/going off site
☐ f) Having to travel/time to get to school/work placements
☐ g) Particular teacher(s)
☐ h) Particular subject/content area(s)
☐ i) Difficulty/amount of work
☐ j) Type of work, e.g., academic, writing reports
☐ k) The work is boring
☐ l) The work is not relevant to interests/career plans
☐ m) Assessments/Unit Stds
☐ n) Homework
☐ o) Discipline/rules/uniform
☐ p) Missing out on other subjects
☐ q) Other _____

11a) Would you recommend PROGRAMME to other students?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q11c)   3) Not sure (goto q12a)

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11b) *(If yes)* What type of student would you recommend PROGRAMME to? *(Prompt: likes working with hands, wants a job in…)*

11c) For what reasons would you **not** recommend PROGRAMME?

12a) In general, how well do you think you have done at school this year*? (Prompt: Compared with last year?) (Read out)*
1) Very well   2) Quite well   3) Well   4) Not very well   5) Not at all well

12b) How do you know you have done _____well? *(Prompt; qualifications, school results)*

13) Are there any things at school or at home that could have helped you to do better at school this year? *(These were?)*

☐ a) Yes
☐ b) No **(goto q14a)**
☐ c) Not sure **(goto q14a)**
☐ d) Student also gives personal reasons
Sch:
Home:
Other/self:

14a) This year, how well do you think school has prepared you for life outside school? *(Read out list up to 5)*
1) Very well   2) Quite well   3) Well   4) Not very well   5) Not at all well   (6) Not sure)

14b) How do you know school has prepared you _____ well this year?

Work or study plans for next year (2003)

I am now going to ask you some questions about your plans for next year.

15) Could you tell me if you are planning to stay at school next year?

☐ a) No
☐ b) Not sure
☐ c) Yes: stay at school – in 2nd year of programme
☐ d) Yes: Stay at school – repeat programme
☐ e) Yes: Stay at school – do other subjects/mainstream
☐ f) Yes: Go to another school

16) Could you tell me what you are planning to do when you leave school?
(Prompt: Do you have any study or work plans?)

- [ ] a) Not sure of plans
- [ ] b) Work plans
- [ ] c) Study plans
- [ ] d) Travel overseas
- [ ] e) Leave school without a job or training plans/hanging out
- [ ] f) Other _____

Study plans

17) Do you have plans to do any courses, training, or qualifications after you finish PROGRAMME? **OR**   What are your study plans?

1) Yes-firm plans   2) Yes-vague plans   3) No (goto q20a)

a) *Study area 1 (hospitality/tourism/engineering, etc)*

b) *Qualification 1 (diploma/degree/certificate/not sure)*

c) *Institution 1*

- [ ] a) At a different school
- [ ] b) Youth Training/TOPS
- [ ] c) Private Training Establishment (PTE)
- [ ] d) Polytechnic
- [ ] e) College of education
- [ ] f) University
- [ ] g) Not sure
- [ ] h) Other

d) *Study area 2 (hospitality/tourism/engineering, etc)*

e) *Qualification 2 (diploma/degree/certificate/not sure)*

f) *Institution 2*

- [ ] a) At a different school
- [ ] b) Youth Training/TOPS
- [ ] c) Private Training Establishment (PTE)
- [ ] d) Polytechnic
- [ ] e) College of education
- [ ] f) University
- [ ] g) Not sure
- [ ] h) Other

18) Is this course(s) related to what you did this year in PROGRAMME?
1) Yes-all plans   2) Yes-some plans   3) No   4) Not sure

19a) Do you think there is anything that might stop you from getting the kind of education you would like in the future?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q20a)   3) Not sure (goto q20a)

19b) *(If yes)* What things? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

☐ a) Change in direction, e.g., career interest
☐ b) Getting a job/apprenticeship
☐ c) Workload/difficulty of work
☐ d) Courses are boring/unenjoyable
☐ e) Not getting on with the teachers on the course
☐ f) Not getting on with the students on the course
☐ g) Attitude/motivation
☐ h) Self-confidence
☐ i) Money-related problems
☐ j) Lack of parental support
☐ k) Not wanting to move town/away from family
☐ l) Family commitments, e.g., church
☐ m) Peer pressure/friends doing different things
☐ n) Relationships/pregnancy
☐ o) Travel distances (getting to course)
☐ p) Health-related problems
☐ q) Other_____

Work plans

20a) Do you have any ideas about the type of job, apprenticeship, or career you would like to have after you finish studying? *(Write plans)*
1)   Yes-Job   2) Yes-Apprenticeship   3) No (goto q22a)

1st
2nd

20b) Is the job you plan to do related to what you did this year in PROGRAMME?
1) Yes-all plans   2) Yes-some plans   3) No   4) Not sure

21a) Do you think there is anything that might stop you from getting the kind of job that you would like in the future?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q22a)   3) Not sure (goto q22a)

21b) *(If yes)* What things? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

- ☐ a) Not having the qualifications
- ☐ b) Not having the skills
- ☐ c) No jobs available/too much competition
- ☐ d) Not having work experience in that area
- ☐ e) Attitude/motivation
- ☐ f) Self-confidence
- ☐ g) Money-related problems
- ☐ h) Lack of parental support
- ☐ i) Not wanting to move town/away from family
- ☐ j) Family commitments, e.g., church
- ☐ k) Peer pressure/friends doing different things
- ☐ l) Relationships/pregnancy
- ☐ m) Travel distances (getting to workplace)
- ☐ n) Health-related problems
- ☐ o) Other_____

Paid work this year: ***I'm now going to ask if you did any work for money this year.***

22a) Did you have a part-time, casual, or holiday job this year?

- ☐ a) No **(go to q23a)**
- ☐ b) Yes – regular part-time work during the term
- ☐ c) Yes – irregular/casual work during year
- ☐ d) Yes – mainly holidays
- ☐ e) Other _____

22b) What work were you doing?

22c) How many hours a week on average did you work during **term time**? _____hours

22d) Did you get this job as part of your PROGRAMME at school?

1) Yes   2) No

22e) Do you think this part-time work had any effect on your schoolwork?

1) Yes   2) No   3) Not sure

22f) *(If yes)* Please describe.

23a) Are you planning to work over the Christmas holidays this year?

☐ a) No **(go to q24a)**
☐ b) Not sure
☐ c) Yes – full-time
☐ d) Yes – part-time
☐ e) Yes – irregular/casual
☐ f) Other _____

23b) What work do you plan to do?

23c) Will you get this job from contacts you have made from PROGRAMME?
1) Yes   2) No   3) Not sure

Transition information and assistance

I'm now going to ask you some questions about the information you are using to help you decide about future jobs or courses.

24a) Has being in PROGRAMME helped you to decide what work or study you want to do in the future?

☐ a) No **(goto q25a)**
☐ b) Yes – work
☐ c) Yes – study

24b) *(If yes)* How has being in PROGRAMME helped you decide?

25a) THIS YEAR, have you received any information, advice, or help about courses or jobs you could do, for example, from PROGRAMME teacher?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q25c)

25b) I am going to read out a list of people who, in the last year, might have given you information, advice, or help about courses and jobs. Could you say "yes" or "no" as I read out this list to tell me who you talked to, and then tell me what information, advice, or help they gave you.

☐ *a) PROGRAMME teacher(s)*
☐ *b) Careers or transition teachers at your school*
☐ *c) Deans, tutor teachers, or other teachers at your school*
☐ *d) People that you met on work experience*
☐ *e) Other people, who are not school teachers, who **taught** parts of your school course (e.g., from Polytechnics or Private Training Enterprises)*
☐ *f) Your family or family friends*
☐ *g) Your friends or other students*

25c) I'm now going to read out a list of other information sources that you might
have used **this year** to help you decide what course or job you want to do.
Could you say "yes" or "no" as I read out this list to tell me which sources you
used.

- [ ] a) Course pamphlets or handbooks put out by polytechnics or universities
- [ ] b) Course pamphlets or handbooks put out by other training
organisations/PTEs
- [ ] c) Talks by polytechnic or university visitors
- [ ] d) Other careers talks by visiting employers, the army, etc
- [ ] e) Visits to polytechnic or university
- [ ] f) Visits to other places that run courses *(e.g., PTEs)*
- [ ] g) Career Expos
- [ ] h) Pamphlets about jobs and careers
- [ ] i) Career Quest CD ROM *(a career information CD)*
- [ ] j) Te Mana Taiohi CD ROM *(a career information CD for Māori)*
- [ ] k) KiwiCareers website
- [ ] l) Other Internet websites
- [ ] m) Careerpoint telephone careers information
- [ ] n) Sources such as newspapers, magazines
- [ ] o) TV
- [ ] p) Other *(describe)*_____
- [ ] q) No other sources used

Summary questions

26) This is the second to last question. Are there any other things you would like to
say about PROGRAMME that we have not already talked about? Would you
like to make a final comment about how this year has gone for you?

Give student q27 and read the intro:

This question asks about your attitudes to school THIS YEAR. Please tick one box to show how
much you agree or disagree with each statement. When you read each statement, think of your
feelings about school THIS YEAR.

27) This question asks about your attitudes to school this year. Please circle one number to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement. When you reading each statement, think of your feelings about school THIS YEAR.

School is a place where:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am given the chance to do work that really interests me . . .	1	2	3	4
2. I like learning	1	2	3	4
3. I enjoy myself	1	2	3	4
4. I get good marks	1	2	3	4
5. Teachers listen to what I say	1	2	3	4
6. I feel confident	1	2	3	4
7. I have good friends.	1	2	3	4
8. The things I am taught are worthwhile learning	1	2	3	4
9. I get tired of trying.	1	2	3	4
10. I keep out of trouble	1	2	3	4
11. I learn most things pretty quickly	1	2	3	4
12. I get a hard time from other students.	1	2	3	4
13. Teachers are fair and just.	1	2	3	4
14. The things I learn are important to me.	1	2	3	4
15. I don't get on with my teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. I find that learning is a lot of fun	1	2	3	4
17. The work I do is good preparation for the future.	1	2	3	4
18. I get bored	1	2	3	4
19. Teachers help me to do my best	1	2	3	4
20. I get all the help I need.	1	2	3	4
21. I achieve a standard in my work I consider satisfactory.	1	2	3	4
22. I like my teachers	1	2	3	4
23. The skills I learn will be of use to me when I leave school . .	1	2	3	4
24. I get restless.	1	2	3	4
25. Things I learn at school are not much use for my future.	1	2	3	4
26. I could do better work if I tried harder.	1	2	3	4
27. I like to ask questions in class.	1	2	3	4
28. I feel happy	1	2	3	4
29. I know how to cope with the work	1	2	3	4
30. I always try to do my best.	1	2	3	4
31. I am a success as a student.	1	2	3	4

Appendix C: Innovative Pathways
Parent Interview – End of 2002

Outcomes

I am going to ask you some questions about what you think [XXX] got out of school and PROGRAMME this year.

1)　What do you think [XXX] got out of doing PROGRAMME this year? Did [XXX] gain any qualifications or skills, or did you notice that he/she developed any social or personal skills from doing his/her course this year? *(Ask as general question first, then prompt for ALL areas not mentioned below.)*

☐ *a) Qualifications (e.g., Unit Standards, National Certificates, NCEA, other)*
☐ *b) Practical skills*
☐ *c) Work experience or knowledge of the workplace*
☐ *d) Communication or social skills (including leadership skills)*
☐ *e) Motivation, personal development, self-esteem, attitude changes (work ethic)*
☐ *f) Part- or full-time jobs or an apprenticeship*
☐ *g) Other*

2a)　Do you know if the Unit Standards or Certificates that [XXX] got this year lead to a further qualification, at Polytech or another organisation? *(Prompt: Are his/her school qualifications part of a certificate that can be continued at Polytech?)*
　　1) Yes　　　**2) No (goto q3)**　　　　　　**3) Not sure (goto q3)**

2b)　*(If yes)* Could you describe how that works?

Opinions of school

I am now going to ask you some questions about [XXX's] attitude to school. When you are answering these questions, think of [XXX's] feelings about school THIS YEAR.

3)　In general, how motivated was [XXX] by PROGRAMME this year? *(Read up to 5)*
　　1) A lot　**2) Quite a bit**　**3) A bit**　　**4) Not much**　**5) Not much at all**　**(6) Not sure)**

4)　How much did [XXX] like PROGRAMME this year? *(Read up to 5)*
　　1) A lot　**2) Quite a bit**　**3) A bit**　　**4) Not much**　**5) Not much at all**　**(6) Not sure)**

5a)   Have [XXX's] feelings about school changed since last year (2001)?
      1) Yes-positive change   2) Yes-negative change   3) No (goto q6a)

5b)   *(If yes)* What do you think caused [XXX's] feelings about school to change?

6a)   Do you think doing PROGRAMME helped to keep [XXX] at school?
      1) Yes-major factor   2)Yes-minor factor   3) No (goto q7)   4) Not sure (goto q7)

6b)   *(If yes)* What was it about PROGRAMME that helped to keep [XXX] at school?
      (Write answer and code as many as needed.)

- [ ] a) Not sure/don't know enough about it
- [ ] b) Factors to do with work experience/gave transition experiences
- [ ] c) Non-school provider or off-site learning (e.g., polytechnic/PTE/trips)
- [ ] d) Got on well with teachers/teachers supported/encouraged interests
- [ ] e) Got on well with students/work as a team
- [ ] f) Got on well with people in workplace
- [ ] g) Gave opportunities for part-time/full-time work/apprenticeship
- [ ] h) More motivating/challenging/worked harder/developed work ethic
- [ ] i) Developed more positive attitude to school/spin-off to other subjects
- [ ] j) Developed student's confidence/opportunities to show skills
- [ ] k) Learning/getting qualifications
- [ ] l) New subject content/liked particular area
- [ ] m) More practical/hands-on
- [ ] n) Related to student's plans/see link to career/see link theory and practice
- [ ] o) Course more fun/interesting/enjoyable
- [ ] p) Work is easier
- [ ] q) More independent learning environment/work at own pace
- [ ] r) More flexibility/choice of subjects or areas
- [ ] s) Spend more time on core subjects/compulsory subjects
- [ ] t) Structure of the day is different/stay together as class
- [ ] u) Assessment style is different (e.g., no tests, Unit Stds, Nat Certs)
- [ ] v) Other _____

7) What were the things about PROGRAMME, or the teachers that took it, that you liked? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

- [ ] a) Nothing
- [ ] b) Not sure/didn't know enough about it
- [ ] c) Student got on well with other students/team environment
- [ ] d) Student got on well with teachers/teachers supported/encouraged interests
- [ ] e) Student got on well with people in the workplace
- [ ] f) Work experience/gave transition experiences
- [ ] g) Gave opportunities for part-time/full-time work/apprenticeship
- [ ] h) Non-school provider or off-site learning (e.g., polytechnic/PTE/trips)
- [ ] i) Good communication with home/good parent relationship with teachers
- [ ] j) Student monitored well
- [ ] k) Developed student's confidence/opportunities to show skills
- [ ] l) Learning/getting qualifications/developing skills
- [ ] m) More motivating/challenging/worked harder/developed work ethic
- [ ] n) Developed more positive attitude to school/spin-off to other subjects
- [ ] o) New subject content/liked particular area
- [ ] p) Course more fun/interesting/enjoyable
- [ ] q) More practical/hands-on
- [ ] r) Related to student's plans/sees link to career/sees link theory and practice
- [ ] s) Different structure of programme/stay together as class
- [ ] t) More flexibility/choice of subjects/content
- [ ] u) Work is easier
- [ ] v) Assessment types (e.g., no tests, Unit Stds)
- [ ] w) More independent learning environment/work at own pace
- [ ] x) Other _____

8) Were there any things about PROGRAMME that you thought could be improved? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

- [ ] a) No/fine as is
- [ ] b) Not sure/don't know enough about it
- [ ] c) More communication with home/more discussion about progress
- [ ] d) Change so students not missing out on other subjects
- [ ] e) Improve work experience (more variety/less boring tasks)
- [ ] f) Improve off-site courses
- [ ] g) Better travel arrangements for work experience/off-site work
- [ ] h) Improve relationships/more support/encouragement from teachers
- [ ] i) Better planning/monitoring of student's programme (follow-up interests)
- [ ] j) Better monitoring/management of other students (wagging/distracting)
- [ ] k) Change area(s) student not interested in/boring
- [ ] l) Change area(s) student found too hard
- [ ] m) Change area(s) student found too easy
- [ ] n) Change area(s) student found repeated
- [ ] o) Change type of work, e.g., less writing more practical
- [ ] p) Change assessments/Unit Stds/certificates
- [ ] q) More homework
- [ ] r) Less homework
- [ ] s) Other _____

9a)	In general, how well do you think [XXX] has done at school this year? *(Read out up to 5)*
	**1) A lot	2) Quite a bit	3) A bit	4) Not much	5) Not much at all	(6) Not sure)**

9b)	How do you know that [XXX] has done _____well? *(Possible prompt; From qualifications, school results, or teacher meetings?)*

10a)	Are there any things at school or at home that could have helped [XXX] to do better at school this year? *(tick as many as necessary)*

	☐ a) Yes
	☐ b) No **(goto q11a)**
	☐ c) Not sure **(goto q11a)**
	☐ d) Parent makes personal comment about student's motivation, etc.

10b)	*(If yes)* Could you please describe these? *(Prompt: school/home.)*
	Sch:
	Home
	Other/personal

11a)	This year, how well do you think school has prepared [XXX] for life outside school? *(Read out up to 5)*
	**1) Very well	2) Quite well	3) Well	4) Not very well	5) Not at all well	(6) Not sure)**

11b)	How do you know school has prepared [XXX] _____well this year?

Work or study plans for the future

12)	Could you tell me if [XXX] is planning to stay at school next year? *(Code answer.)*

	☐ a) No (leaving school)
	☐ b) Not sure
	☐ c) Yes: stay at school – in 2nd year of programme
	☐ d) Yes: Stay at school – repeat programme
	☐ e) Yes: Stay at school – do other subjects/mainstream
	☐ f) Yes: Go to another school

13)	Could you tell me what you think [XXX] is planning to do when he/she finishes school? *(Prompt: What are his/her main work or study plans?) (Write answer and code.)*

	☐ a) Not sure of plans
	☐ b) Work plans
	☐ c) Study plans
	☐ d) Travelling (NZ or overseas)
	☐ e) Leave school without a job or training plans/hanging out
	☐ f) Other _____

Study plans

14) Does [XXX] have plans to do any courses, training, or qualifications after he/she finishes _____school? **OR**   What are [XXX's] study plans?
1) Yes-firm plans   2) Yes-vague plans   3) No (goto q17a)   4) Not sure (go to q17a)

a) Study area 1 (hospitality/tourism/engineering, etc):

b) Qualification 1 (diploma/degree/certificate/not sure):

c) Institution 1:

- ☐ a) Secondary school
- ☐ b) Youth Training/TOPS
- ☐ c) Private Training Establishment (PTE)
- ☐ d) Polytechnic
- ☐ e) College of education
- ☐ f) University
- ☐ g) Not sure
- ☐ h) Other

d) Study area 2 (hospitality/tourism/engineering, etc):

e) Qualification 2 (diploma/degree/certificate/not sure):

f) Institution 2

- ☐ a) Secondary school
- ☐ b) Youth Training/TOPS
- ☐ c) Private Training Establishment (PTE)
- ☐ d) Polytechnic
- ☐ e) College of education
- ☐ f) University
- ☐ g) Not sure
- ☐ h) Other

15) Is this course(s) related to what [XXX] did this year in PROGRAMME?
1) Yes-all plans   2) Yes-some plans   3) No   4) Not sure

16a) Do you think there is anything that might stop [XXX] from getting the kind of education you would like him/her to have in the future?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q17a)   3) Not sure (goto q17a)

16b) *(If yes)* What things? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

- [ ] a) Change in direction, e.g., career interest
- [ ] b) Getting a job/apprenticeship
- [ ] c) Not having the qualifications
- [ ] d) Workload/difficulty of work
- [ ] e) Courses are boring/unenjoyable
- [ ] f) Not getting on with the teachers on the course
- [ ] g) Not getting on with the students on the course
- [ ] h) Attitude/motivation
- [ ] i) Self-confidence
- [ ] j) Learning difficulties
- [ ] k) ESL (English as a second language)
- [ ] l) Cost/money-related problems
- [ ] m) Lack of parental support
- [ ] n) Family commitments, e.g., church
- [ ] o) Peer pressure/friends doing different things/social life
- [ ] p) Relationships/pregnancy
- [ ] q) Travel distances (getting to course)
- [ ] r) Moving town, city, or country
- [ ] s) Health-related problems
- [ ] t) Other_____

Work plans

17a) Does [XXX] have any ideas about the type of job, apprenticeship, or career he/she would like to have after he/she finishes studying? *(Code and write plans.)*
1) Yes-Job   2) Yes-Apprenticeship   3) No (goto q19a)   4) Not sure (goto q19a)

1st Job/apprentice:
2nd Job/apprentice:

17b) Is the job [XXX] plans to do related to what he/she did this year in PROGRAMME?
1) Yes-all plans   2) Yes-some plans   3) No   4) Not sure

18a) Do you think there is anything that might stop [XXX] from getting the kind of job that you would like him/her to have in the future?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q19a)   3) Not sure (goto q19a)

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18b) *(If yes)* What things? *(Write answer and code as many as needed.)*

- ☐ a) Not having the qualifications
- ☐ b) Not having the skills
- ☐ c) No jobs available/too much competition
- ☐ d) Not having work experience in that area
- ☐ e) Attitude/motivation
- ☐ f) Self-confidence
- ☐ g) Learning difficulties
- ☐ h) ESL (English as a second language)
- ☐ i) Cost/money-related problems
- ☐ j) Lack of parental support
- ☐ k) Family commitments, e.g., church
- ☐ l) Peer pressure/friends doing different things/social life
- ☐ m) Relationships/pregnancy
- ☐ n) Travel distances (getting to workplace)
- ☐ o) Moving town, city, or country
- ☐ p) Health-related problems
- ☐ q) Other_____

Information and advice

I am now going to ask you a couple of questions about the information [XXX] has used to make decisions about his/her future.

19a) Do you think being in PROGRAMME helped [XXX] to decide what work or courses he/she he wants to do in the future?
1) Yes   2) No   3) Not sure (goto q20a)

19b) *(If yes)* How did being in PROGRAMME help her/him decide?

(If no) Why not? *(Prompt: Had [XXX] already decided what they were going to do?)*

20a) This year, have you given [XXX] advice, information, or help about what courses or work to do in the future?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q21)   3) Not sure (goto q21)

20b) *(If yes)* what advice, information, or help did you give? *(Possible prompt: Discussing options/information about courses.)*

Background

21) I would like to ask you a question about your background. Could you tell me which ethnic group or groups you belong to? *(Tick as many as needed.)*

☐ a) Maori
☐ b) Cook Island Maori
☐ c) Pakeha/European
☐ d) Samoan
☐ e) Tongan
☐ f) Fijian
☐ g) Niuean
☐ h) Other Pacific Nation _____
☐ i) Asian
☐ j) Indian
☐ k) Other _____

(Do not ask q22 if only one group is identified in q21.)

22a) Is there one group you mainly see yourself as? *(Code **one** only.)*
1) Yes   2) No (goto q23)   3) Not sure (goto q23)

22b) *(If yes)* What group?
1) Maori
2) Cook Island Maori
3) Pakeha/European
4) Samoan
5) Tongan
6) Fijian
7) Niuean
8) Other Pacific Nation _____
9) Asian
10) Indian
11) Other _____

23) This is the last question in the interview. Are there any other things you would like to say about [XXX's] year at school or PROGRAMME that we have not talked about?

Would you like to make a final comment about how this year has gone for [XXX]?

Appendix D: Innovative Pathways
Phase 3 Young Person Follow-up
Interview – 2004

Activities since leaving secondary school

First I'd like to ask you about when you left secondary school, and the sorts of things you have been doing since then.

1) **Could you tell me when you left secondary school?** *(read out options if not answered)*
Was it?
- ☐ 1) At the end of the 2002 school year?
- ☐ 2) During the 2002 school year?
- ☐ 3) At the end of the 2003 school year?
- ☐ 4) During the 2003 school year?
- ☐ 5) I returned to secondary school in 2004 (after leaving for awhile)
- ☐ 6) I am still at secondary school in 2004 **(TRANSFER TO OTHER INTERVIEW)**
- ☐ 7) Other _____

2) **Could you tell me what you are doing right now? Like are you working, working and studying at the same time, or hanging out?** *(Write full details of activities including type of job or jobs, following leisure interests, if getting the unemployment benefit, etc.)*

Type of activity	Full/part-time/casual	Paid or unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid
	a) Full-T b) Part-T c) Cas	a) Paid b) Unpaid

3) **Could you start at the time you left secondary school and tell me ALL the things you have done since then like part- or full-time work, an apprenticeship, or a course? Please also tell me about the times you haven't been working and what you were doing then. What did you do when you FIRST left secondary school?** *(Complete table)*

What did you do next?

(For each activity fill in a block in the table. Write all the things done at approximately the same time in one block. Go to the next when the main activity/activities change. Keep prompting to fill in the details for each activity: What did you do next? Was that full-time or part-time? Did you do anything else at the same time? How long did you do that for?)

No.	Description of all things that were done at about the same time, e.g., job, study, not working, work experience or apprenticeship in …… etc.	General timeframe and nature of activities
1st	*General time frame: (circle main time frame covered in this block)* a) Mid 2002 End 2002 Start 2003 Mid 2003 End 2003 Start 2004 *Write description of activity below e.g.,* **TYPE of job** *and place of work* — *Job details: (circle one for a) and b) and write length of time in c))* 1.………………………………….…..………………..…… a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 2.……………………………………………………a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 3.………………………………………………….. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 4.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 5.……………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 6.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ Explanation notes *(any extra details e.g., that are not written above):* ……… ………………………………………………...………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………………	
2nd		a) Mid 2002 End 2002 Start 2003 Mid 2003 End 2003 Start 2004 1.………………………………….…..………………..…… a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 2.……………………………………………………a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 3.………………………………………………….. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 4.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 5.……………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 6.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ Explanation notes: ……… ………………………………………………...………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………………
3rd		a) Mid 2002 End 2002 Start 2003 Mid 2003 End 2003 Start 2004 1.………………………………….…..………………..…… a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 2.……………………………………………………a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 3.………………………………………………….. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 4.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 5.……………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ 6.…………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____ Explanation notes: ……… ………………………………………………...………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………………

4th	a) Mid 2002 End 2002 Start 2003 Mid 2003 End 2003 Start 2004
	1…………………………………..…………….… a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	2……………………………………………….a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	3……………………………………………….. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	4………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	5………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	6………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	Explanation notes:
	……
	……………………………………………...…………………………………………………………………………
	………………………………………………………………………………
5th	a) Mid 2002 End 2002 Start 2003 Mid 2003 End 2003 Start 2004
	1…………………………………..…..………….… a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	2……………………………………………….a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	3……………………………………………….. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	4………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	5………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	6………………………………………………. a) Job Study Other *b) Full-T Part-T Cas* c) mths____ yrs____
	Explanation notes:
	……
	……………………………………………...…………………………………………………………………………
	………………………………………………………………………………

Work activities *(Ask only if have worked/done an apprenticeship)*

4) **Could you tell me how you got the jobs (or apprenticeships) you have just talked about?** *(Go thru all jobs listed in Q3. Write answers, CODE later.)*

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

5) **AFTER leaving secondary school, how did you got your FIRST job (or apprenticeship)?** *(Use info from Q4, check for first job AFTER school. Write answer, CODE later.)*

(Code one answer only)

☐ a) Through friends

☐ b) Through family/family friends

☐ c) Through teachers/school careers service/school

☐ d) From school work experience

☐ e) Developed from a part-time work/holiday job (started at school)

☐ f) Developed from a part-time work/holiday job/casual job (after left school)

☐ g) From a tertiary course (done while at school)

☐ h) Through a course/tertiary provider/careers staff at tertiary (when left school)

☐ i) Through a work broker/WINZ staff/Careers Service staff (Govt agencies)

☐ j) From an employment agency

☐ k) From an apprenticeship co-ordinator/ITO

☐ l) By asking at places I was interested in working at

☐ m) By applying for it from an advertisement/Internet/newspaper

☐ n) They asked me if I wanted to work there

☐ o) Other:_____

6) **When you left secondary school, what made you decide to do these jobs (or apprenticeship)? What were the experiences, information, or people who influenced your decisions?** *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

7) **Are any of the jobs (or apprenticeships) you have done related in any way to the things you did at secondary school?**

1) Yes-Mostly   2) Yes-some/partly   3) No (goto q8)   4) Not sure (goto q8)

Study activities *(Ask only if have studied)*

8) **I'm now going to ask you about the courses you've done since leaving secondary school. What was the first course you did? What did you study?** *(Prompt and fill in table for all courses.)*

No.	8a) What did you study? (e.g., engineering/tourism)	8b) Where did you study? (e.g., name of institution, like MIT)	8c) Have you finished the course?	8d) Did you get any credits or a qualification like a certificate or a diploma?	8e) What is the name of the qualification? (e.g., Level 2 Cert. in Business Computing) OR How many/what type of credits?
1st	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credits) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2nd	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credit) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3rd	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credit) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4th	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credit) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5th	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credit) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6th	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1) Yes 2) Still on 3) No	1) Yes (some credit) 2) Yes (full qualif) 3) No 4) Not sure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9a) Did you get extra money to study, like a grant or a scholarship? *(but **NOT** student loan)*
  1) Yes   2) No (goto q10a)   3) Not sure (goto q10a)

9b) For which course (or courses)?   1   2   3   4   5   6

10a) Did you get special admission into a course, like Māori or Pacific special admissions?
  1) Yes   2) No (goto q11a)   3) Not sure (goto q11a)

10b) For which course (or courses)?   1   2   3   4   5   6

11a) Was your course free or did you have to pay course fees (was it a SkillNZ/TEC course)?
  1) Yes-free 2) No-paid fees (goto q12a)   3) Not sure (goto q12a)

11b) Which course (or courses) was free?   1   2   3   4   5   6

12a) Is the course (any of the courses) you did related in any way to the things you did at secondary school?
  1) Yes-Mostly   2) Yes-some/partly   3) No (goto q13) 4) Not sure (goto q13)

12b) Which course (or courses)?   1   2   3   4   5   6

13) When you left secondary school, how did you decide which courses you wanted to do? What were the experiences, information, or people who influenced your decisions? *(Prompt: How did they influence you?) (WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

14a) Since you left secondary school, have you changed your mind about the courses you've been doing in any way? *(Use info from q8, person may have already told you their plans have changed.)*
  1) Yes   2) No (goto q15a)   3) Not sure (goto q15a)

14b) What were the reasons you changed your mind about your course(s)? What were the experiences, information, or people who influenced your decisions? *(Prompt: How did they influence you?) (WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

Plans for the future

I am now going to ask you a couple of questions about your plans for the future.

15a) Do you have any other plans to do any other courses, training, or qualifications in the future?
  1) Yes-definite plans   2) Yes-but not definite plans   3) No (goto q16a)

15b) What type of course or training are you planning to do? (Prompt and fill in table for all courses. Write NOT SURE if person does not know all the details.)

No.	15ba) What are you going to study? (e.g., engineering or tourism)	15bb) Where are you planning to study? (e.g., name of institution, like MIT/not sure)	15bc) What qualification are you going to do? (e.g., Level 2 Certificate/diploma/ degree/Not sure)
1st	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2nd	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3rd	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16a) Do you have an idea of the job you want to do in the future? How sure are you about this?
1) Yes-Continue with current job   2) Yes-other (definite) job plan
3) Yes- other (but not definite) plan   4) No plans/not sure of plans (goto q17)

16b) What is the job you want to do?
1st idea/current job
Do you have a 2nd plan

17) Are your job or study plans for the future related in any way to the things you did at secondary school?
1) Yes-Mostly   2) Yes-some/partly   3) No (goto q18a)   4) Not sure (goto q18a)

18a) Have your ideas about the job you want to do in the future changed since you left secondary school?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q19a)   3) Not sure (goto q19a)

18b) What are the reasons you changed your ideas? What were the experiences, information, or people who influenced you? *(Prompt: How did they influence you?) (WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

19a) Since you left school, have you had any new information or advice that helped you to make decisions about what jobs or study you wanted to do in the future? *(NOTE this questions could have been answered in q18b – transfer this info and ask for details.)*
1) Yes   2) No (goto q20a)   3) Not sure (goto q20a)

19b) Where or who did this information or advice come from? What was it?
Source a:
What information or advice did you get?
Source b:
What information or advice did you get?
Source c:
What information or advice did you get?

Thoughts about your time at secondary school

The next questions ask you to think about your time at secondary school, and whether it helped you to do what you wanted to.

20a) From the experiences you have now had, how well do you think secondary school prepared you for life outside school? *(Read out list up to 5 – circle one)*
1) Very well   2) Quite well   3) Well   4) Not very well   5) Not at all well   6) Not sure

20b) What was it about school that prepared you _____ well? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

21a) If you were going to repeat your LAST YEAR AT SECONDARY SCHOOL, would you take the same courses, or do things differently?
1) Different   2) Same courses (goto q22a)   3) Not sure (goto q22a)

21b) What are the MAIN things you would have done differently?
b) Why would you have done this differently?

22a) The teachers at your secondary school tried different things to help you with your decisions about your future, like, giving you information about jobs and courses, showing you how to research different jobs, organising work experience or visits to polytechnics. Looking back, do you think this help was useful to you? *(Read list up to 5)*

1) Very useful 2) Quite useful 3) Useful 4) Not very useful 5) Not at all useful 6) Not sure

22b) What were the most useful things you did?

1) Did not do any useful things   2) Not sure
a) Useful thing
b) What was useful about this?

23a) Was there any information or help with making decisions about your future, you think you needed at secondary school, but didn't get?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q24a)   3) Not sure (goto q24a)

23b) What kind of information or help did you not get? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

24a) Are there any skills you learnt at secondary school that you found useful when you left school, like study skills, job researching skills, communication skills, or computer skills?
1) Yes   2) No (goto q25a)   3) Not sure (goto q25a)

24b) What are these skills? *(Write answer, CODE later)*

Interpersonal and communication skills
☐ a) Customer services skills (e.g., phone skills, café work)
☐ b) General communication/social skills (speaking to groups, asking questions)
☐ c) Written communication skills/English
☐ d) Teamwork skills
☐ e) Leadership skills
☐ f) Job interview skills
Study/life skills
☐ g) Study skills (writing essays/note-taking/researching/time-management)
☐ h) Computer skills
☐ i) Maths skills/budgeting/managing money
☐ j) Flatting skills (being independent)
☐ k) Legal rights
☐ l) Job researching/career planning skills
☐ m) Practical skills (cooking, woodwork, metal work, kayaking, sports coaching, first aid)
☐ n) OTHER SKILLS: _____

25a) Are there any attitudes you learnt at secondary school that you found useful when you left school, like motivation or self-confidence?
    1) Yes   2) No (goto q26a)   3) Not sure (goto q26a)

25b) What are these attitudes? *(Write answer, CODE later)*

Attitudes
☐ a) Self-confidence/self-esteem
☐ b) Motivation/working hard
☐ c) Understanding of other people
☐ d) Flexibility/going with the flow
☐ e) OTHER: _____

26a) Are there any skills or attitudes you COULD HAVE learnt at secondary school, but didn't, that could have helped you when you left? *(Prompt: Are there any things school didn't teach you, that you think young people need to be taught to help them in the future?)*
    1) Yes   2) No (goto q27a)   3) Not sure (goto q27a)

26b) What are these skills or attitudes? *(Write answer, CODE later)*

> **Interpersonal and communication skills**
> ☐ a) Customer services skills (e.g., phone skills, café work)
> ☐ b) General communication/social skills (speaking to groups, asking questions)
> ☐ c) Written communication skills
> ☐ d) Teamwork skills
> ☐ e) Leadership skills
> ☐ f) Job interview skills
> **Study/life skills**
> ☐ g) Study skills (writing essays/note-taking/researching/time-management)
> ☐ h) Computer skills
> ☐ i) Budgeting/maths skills/managing money
> ☐ j) Flatting skills (being independent)
> ☐ k) Legal rights
> ☐ l) Job researching/career planning skills
> ☐ m) Practical skills (cooking, woodwork, metal work, kayaking, sports coaching)
> **Attitudes**
> ☐ n) Self-confidence/self-esteem
> ☐ o) Motivation/working hard
> ☐ q) Understanding of other people
> ☐ r) Flexibility/going with the flow
> ☐ s) OTHER: _____

Summary questions

I am now going to ask you a few final questions about how you have made decisions and how things are going for you.

27a) Overall, thinking of ALL the experiences you have had, ALL the people you have talked to, and ALL the sources of information you have used to make decisions about what jobs or courses you want to do, which things have you found the most useful? *(Write answer – go through each on next page.)*
1) Did not do any useful things   2) Not sure

27b) What was it about these things that made them useful to you?
a) Source 1:   b) Useful because:
c) Source 2:   d) Useful because:
e) Source 3:   f) Useful because:
g) Source 4:   h) Useful because:

28) Overall, how have things been going for you since you left secondary school?
Could you tell me how come things have been going _____? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

29a) Are you doing the sorts of things you wanted to do when you left secondary school?
1) Yes (goto q30a)   2) No   3) Not sure (goto q30a)

29b) What have you NOT been able to do? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*

29c) Are there any reasons you HAVE NOT been able to do this? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER, CODE later.)*

Course and work reasons **(Code as many as necessary)**

☐ a) Study/work was too difficult/too much work

☐ b) Did not enjoy course/work

☐ c) Did not get on with course tutors/students/workmates

☐ d) Did not have necessary qualifications/skills (to get into course/jobs)

☐ e) No courses/work available in interest area

Information and advice reasons

☐ f) Didn't have enough access to good advice/information about options

Personal reasons

☐ g) Financial reasons/lack of money/other options cheaper

☐ h) Lack of motivation

☐ i) Couldn't find options related to personal career plans

☐ j) Couldn't find options related to personal values

☐ k) Couldn't find options related to personal life style options (e.g., would get me a job overseas)

☐ l) Wanted to go travelling

☐ m) Wanted to be with/near friends

☐ n) Relationships/pregnancy

☐ o) Health-related problems

Family reasons

☐ p) Family wanted me to do something else/did not support my choice

☐ q) Family commitments (e.g., church/looking after whānau)

Travelling/moving reasons

☐ r) Travel distances to far (getting to course)

☐ s) Did not want to be away from home/family

☐ t) Wanted to live in a different place

☐ u) Other_____

30a) If you were going to repeat THE TIME SINCE YOU LEFT SECONDARY SCHOOL, would you do the same things, or do things differently?

1) Different   2) Same (goto q31)   3) Not sure (goto q31)

30b) What are the MAIN things you would have done differently?

a) Different

b)   Why would you have done this differently?

31)   This is the last question. Is there anything else you would like to say about how the last year has gone for you, and your goals for the future? *(WRITE FULL ANSWER)*