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Personal Educational Planning at Secondary School: Vision and Voice

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education,
The University of Auckland, 2015.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and perceptions of those involved with personal educational planning (PEP) in a twenty-first century secondary school in New Zealand. PEP is the process students use to organize and plan for their learning as it unfolds throughout their school career and into the future. This thesis examines opportunities for student agency in managing their PEP; parents' roles and engagement in student learning partnerships; and students' efficacy beliefs in becoming self-regulated learners.

The two-phased study is situated within an interpretive framework and employs a mixed methods case study approach. The first phase sought to capture a wide cross section of perceptions and experiences with a view to scoping the phenomenon of PEP within a specific secondary school context. The second phase aimed to gain in-depth understandings from a small number of participants in relation to PEP experiences over the course of eighteen months. The intention was to gain insights relating to their experiences of PEP from a student who was fully engaged with the process; one who was semi-engaged and one who was disengaged. Teachers, whanau tutors and leaders directly associated with these students were interviewed as well as the students' parents or caregivers.

Findings reported revealed that the principal and teachers had similar understandings in regard to the processes and procedures of PEP. The parents also held understandings in common in regard to the nature, place and role of PEP in the school. In contrast the three groupings of students drew attention to the differences among them in relation to their personal competency beliefs around engagement. The advances the students made in their PEP and the associated development of their capabilities had an influence on their personal efficacy. The findings of this study have implications for better understanding the processes and procedures schools, teachers and parents provide for students within the context of personal educational planning and the outcomes for students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the school and all the young people and whānau who generously gave their time and thoughts to this research and made it an exciting journey. To the teacher participants who gave their experiences and energy so graciously. In particular the Principal for enabling me to work over the years and to the Deputy Principal for her wise and ongoing guidance and the dialogue we shared. I have learnt from all of you. Thank you.

I express my gratitude to my supervisor Richard Hamilton for his willingness to supervise for the duration of this project and for his unswerving support. To Maxine Stephenson who always gives so much and beyond, from depths of engagement. Helen Dixon and Eleanor Hawe also need special mention, for assistance in the earliest days of this project.

I am eternally grateful to Ron for his enduring support and wisdom.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the participation of Sonny, Mereana and Ra for their ongoing frank and open retelling of their experiences, frustrations and difficulties, their triumphs and joys. My heart would swim and sing after our interviews. Thank you for helping me construct a picture of your educational planning. This work is for you and for the futures you choose.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Pathways to

The first secondary schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand reflected the British grammar school tradition. They were narrowly academic and selective. Young people whose parents could afford the fees were well placed to gain positions in the learned professions, in governmental departments, or to achieve employer status. The schools emphasised ‘ability’ and were focused towards examination success and the possibility of university study. By the twentieth century there was increased lobbying for wider access to a secondary education that would have practical benefits in an increasingly industrialised modern world. The system of technical high schools introduced as a practical alternative to the grammar schools anticipated institutionally differentiated experiences and outcomes for the students. Secondary schooling continued to act as a social filter, they were rigidly organised and there was little opportunity for students to be personally involved in planning their schooling and post-schooling careers. Today, a global emphasis on higher education and lifelong learning has meant that secondary school students experience more diverse educational options, including flexible pathways to qualifications that recognise a greater range of skills and knowledge than had been anticipated in earlier times (Drucker, 1993; Pring, 2006). In addition, an increasing focus on self-management and responsibility, within a neoliberal rhetoric of ‘consumer choice’, has meant that young people should not only be able to take advantage of the possibilities available to them in the current educational environment, but that they should also be closely involved in preparing for their preferred educational and occupational experiences.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of those involved with personal education planning (PEP) within a New Zealand secondary school today. This will be examined against an understanding of the aims and requirements of PEP within the school, who and what is involved in its development and implementation, and how it is structured throughout the wider school programme. How students experience and navigate their learning, performance and achievement, and generate plans for their future, will be considered through the perceptions of students, and those familiar with their practice including teachers, deans, advisors, the principal and parents. The extent to which students are able to navigate their educational pathways successfully and take ownership of their educational trajectories is central to the inquiry.

Defining an Educational Trajectory

International studies conducted in the past three decades have demonstrated that the failure in the past to effectively track individual students' educational progress through academic and vocational pathways over their entire school careers, has meant that important patterns in student educational underachievement have been either overlooked or tackled ineffectively. In the United States (US) recognition that all students need to be supported in school by at least one adult who showed a genuine interest in their progress was emphasised in The High Schools That Work initiative (1987) which was implemented in over 1,100 schools in 35 states (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003). In addition, Mehan and Hubbard (1999) argued that incorporating academic, general or vocational tracks within the education system significantly addressed the achievement gap between low income minority student groups and their higher socioeconomic peers. Research in the United Kingdom (UK) has highlighted personal development planning (PDP) which includes keeping a progress file beginning at secondary school to help make outcomes of learning more explicit, identifying the achievements of learning, and supporting the concept that learning is a lifetime activity (Gough, Kirwan, Sutcliff, Simpson, & Houghton, 2003). In Finland career guidance and counselling became a compulsory part of the comprehensive school curricula through The Basic Education Act of 1998 (Sahlberg, 2007, 2011). As the global emphasis on higher education and lifelong learning has increased, there has been a strong programmatic approach to tracking students' educational trajectories (Mau, 1995; Sahlberg, 2011; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007; Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, & Eder, 2011).

The importance of forward planning has been noted in New Zealand research. Significant barriers to successful educational advancement and planning have been created when students find out too late in their subject-choosing that they have blocked choices they have subsequently wanted to pursue, or that they have not understood what prerequisites were required for specific secondary school courses and/or university entry level study (Madjar, McKinley, Jensen, & Van Der Merwe, 2009; Shulruf, Keuskamp, & Timperley, 2006). Patterns of evidence-based activity, adjustment of familiar support services in some schools, and the introduction of new practices and systems, suggests that tracking students has drawn growing attention. However identifying what might seem to be an effective alignment of interconnected systems for a student to plan, navigate and define their educational trajectory at secondary school and beyond lacks common definition in the literature.

International research offers a number of classifications which are noted as transposable or related. The actions of teachers, advisors, counsellors or administrators are variously described: *guidance and advisement*, *teacher advisor systems* and *counselor-led developmental guidance* (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2006). Other literature refers to educational planning processes as a system within schools: *instructional programmes* (Stone & Clark, 2001); *individual planning and academics* (Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007); *course taking patterns* (Anderman, 2013; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Leitman, Binns, & Unni, 1995). Subject choosing has also been identified in the overseas literature as an important dimension in shaping a student's educational pathway (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Warton, 1997; Whiston et al., 2011), as does a continued emphasis on tracking students, with effective data and information systems being reported as a significant contributing factor (Earl & Lewis, 2013).

In New Zealand, research studies have been influenced by literature located in careers planning (e.g., Hipkins, Vaughan, Beals, Ferral, & Gardiner, 2005; Hipkins, Vaughan, 2002; Wylie & Hipkins, 2006) and Innovative Pathways from School (Boyd, McDowell, & Cooper, 2002). The Ministry of Education Designing Careers pilot (Education Review Office [ERO], 2006) with its Learning and Career plan (LCP) and the later initiative Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL) (ERO, 2007) have endeavoured to alleviate difficulties it was assumed students were facing in implementing their career plans. However, many of these interventions have been ad hoc in offering compensatory measures and solutions (Vaughan & Gardiner, 2007; Wylie & Hodgen, 2011). An ERO review (2012) on career information, guidance and education in secondary schools found a paucity of high quality provision.

Careers delivery as just one component of personal educational planning highlights the challenge of combining a number of processes and procedures. Possibly the complexity of educational planning lies in the reality that it is not a singular process but relies on networks and patterns of activity in the secondary school system as well as the agency of the students themselves. In reflecting upon and navigating their learning pathways and future directions, students acquire agency when engaging in activities and capabilities around their performance. These competencies might include goal and target setting (Midgley, 2002; Shunk & Swartz, 2003), motivational beliefs (Brophy, 1998) and self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2002) and are important dimensions of a broader academic profiling system (Amatea & Clark, 2007).

While there appears to be no clear formula for the processes of educational planning in New Zealand secondary schools, more recent use of the term ‘academic counselling’ has signaled emerging attention on the academic counselling role of the teacher (e.g., Robertson & Norrie, 2011; Smith, 2010). The term itself implies that students receive coaching and maintain one-to-one counselling. The risk here is that such a naming focus may detract from the other essential elements of school pathways. How students choose subjects, how parents are involved in decisions, how goals are set at school and beyond and how data are used to make informed decisions are just some of the ways in which secondary school education has begun to come into focus by New Zealand government agencies. New Zealand based research on subject choosing (Madjar et al., 2009; Shulruf et al., 2006), target setting (Smith, 2010) and academic counselling (Robertson & Norrie, 2011) have emphasised the important role secondary schools have in supporting students’ educational planning. Furthermore how schools involve parents in partnership so that they are aware of what their child needs to do to succeed in school has been identified in the literature as significant (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; ERO, 2008; Grubb, Lara, & Valdez, 2002).

In this current study, all of these processes are labelled ‘personal educational planning’ (PEP) to encapsulate all of the practices and capabilities outlined above which are used to describe initiatives and actions that support and enhance student experiences as they plan for their personal, educational, future and career development in secondary schools. The thesis examines how a range of activities that inform and develop students’ knowledge and skills in setting goals, monitoring progress and planning for their education at school and beyond within the frame of PEP might be integrated. This is presented as a case study approach of one school, and includes consideration of supportive school processes and practices and the development of enhanced student capabilities.

Educational Policy Reform and Personal Educational Planning

The escalating complex industrial, occupational, economic and social changes that have characterised the global economy (MacLure, 2006) have seen a sharpened policy focus in many countries on the education sector. One issue on which there is general consensus is the need to ensure that all secondary students have a chance to consider their options and make individual informed choices in their educational planning (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2002; McKinley et al., 2009; Torgerson et al., 2008). Universal intensification around teacher quality, student achievement and the educational and vocational participation of ethnic minority groups (Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010;

Darling-Hammond, 2010) has coalesced around a perceived failure on the part of schools to do a good job for the least successful (40% of the system in England, the large ‘tail’ of underachievement in the US and New Zealand). With the new millennium, this was highlighted in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports on the results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2013). These aspects of student underachievement have resulted in greater scrutiny of how students prepare for their education (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Gough et al., 2003; Vaughan & O’Neil, 2010). In particular, enhancing pathways and transitions of traditionally under-represented groups at the tertiary level has gained policy and funding focus and attention. The importance of information, guidance and understanding around secondary students’ educational pathways has been reflected in international studies over the last decade (Levin, 2010; Valijarvi & Sahlberg, 2008; Zbar, Kimber, & Marshall, 2009).

New Zealand research has demonstrated that occupational destination is largely determined by school qualifications (Bishop, 2006; Lauder & Hughes, 1990; Nash, Harker, & Durie, 1992; Thrupp, 1999) and differential success as a product of schooling has exposed the haphazardness of the individual student’s educational planning located within it (e.g., Leach & Zepke, 2005; Thrupp, 2007). Questions regarding a variety of barriers to tertiary participation and career options for many students, not only, but particularly Māori and Pasifika students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006), have been further fuelled by New Zealand’s high levels of child poverty and educational inequality as outlined in the UNICEF Innocenti report (Adamson, 2012). The issue of underachievement has become a significant driver in current PEP initiatives. Consequently secondary schools are under pressure from government agencies to prioritise systems and strategies appropriate to their particular contexts that will enable all students to have success in their educational pathways at school and beyond (Hughes & Karp, 2004; McKinley, Madjar & McKinley 2010; Oliver & Spokane, 1998). This has become a matter of urgency for national education policy and has been expressed in a recent ERO Report which describes priority learners as “groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system. These include many “ Māori and Pacific learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs” (ERO, 2012b, p. 4). The concern for priority learners is of specific interest for this study given the geographical location and the student demographic of the school in which it took place.

The New Zealand Background to the Study

In 2012 the New Zealand government mandated changes to set the target of 85% of 18 year olds attaining level 2 or an equivalent qualification by 2017 in The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). This is a national qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) where in each subject skills and knowledge are assessed against a number of standards and schools use a range of internal and external assessments <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/understanding-ncea/how-ncea-works/standards/> to measure how well students meet these standards. When a student achieves a standard, they need to gain a certain number of credits to gain an NCEA certificate. There are three levels of NCEA certificate, depending on the difficulty of the standards achieved. In general, students work through levels 1 to 3 in years 11 to 13 at school. Students are recognised for high achievement at each level by gaining NCEA with Merit or NCEA with Excellence while high achievement in a course is also recognised through Endorsements. Standards that secondary school students achieve as part of NCEA can be used to staircase other qualifications.

Further expectations are embedded in one of the five core visions for young people in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) which looks for students “who will be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners” (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2007, p. 8). A further key competency in the NZC is related to a student’s ability to “self-manage” (MOE, 2007, p. 12). This suggests it is an opportune time to investigate the experiences and perceptions of those involved with educational pathways at school and beyond. Other imperatives explicit in government initiatives are *Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success/Māori Education Strategy 2008-12* (MOE, 2008a), and *The Māori Education Strategy: Ka Hikitia – Accelerating success 2013-17*, which takes into account the increase in young Māori school leavers qualified to attend university from 14.8% in 2006 to 30% by 2012 (MOE, 2013a, p. 33). *The Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* (MOE, 2013b) has developed from an earlier document which demonstrated success in its target to raise the percentage of Pasifika students leaving school with a university entrance from 23% in 2008 to 30% by the end of 2012 (MOE, 2009, p. 4). While the commitment of secondary schools to manage the educational planning of young people is highlighted, less clear are consistent and accountable structures in a nationwide approach that focuses on ongoing guidance in defining a student’s education trajectory.

At the school level which makes explicit the importance of PEP, two projects have supported the implementation of a model of academic counselling in some targeted New Zealand schools. A Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funded academic counselling project involved eight Auckland and Northland secondary schools with significant Māori and/or Pasifika student populations in the period 2009-2010 (Robertson & Norrie, 2011). Starpath (2009-14), a research project based on tertiary participation and success, has investigated barriers for groups under-represented in higher education and worked with 32 school programmes to help implement academic counselling. Developing new knowledge and processes that might enhance Māori and Pacific student pathways into university has been a key goal of both projects. Robertson and Norrie (2011) have warned of ‘dabbling’ with some of the activities associated with academic counselling, suggesting that the depth of understanding required for successful implementation is often missed without some form of externally facilitated critique. Similarly, researchers on the Starpath Project (McKinley et al., 2009) have suggested that in attempting to enhance student achievement, schools do not deploy their resources strategically, often adopting a proliferation of ‘clip on’ programmes which have not been systemically evaluated against student outcomes. Therefore what might seem to be an effective alignment of interconnected PEP systems does not necessarily address the challenges students face, more so because a process of reconceptualising that network in New Zealand secondary schools is currently underway.

Teachers’ Roles in PEP

While government agencies and policy makers might be advocates for change, teachers at the school level have the potential to drive, reconstitute or reject changes in roles, responsibilities and systems (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). According to Cuban (1988) mandated change has often failed because teachers have been required to participate in initiatives of which they have little understanding. Given that the PEP process has begun to gain traction in the secondary sector, the time is right to try to better understand the nature and impact of programmes that are in place. A focus of this study is to expand on current understandings of those involved with PEP and generate new knowledge in the area. Along with family background, research suggests that it is good teachers who make the greatest difference to student outcomes from schooling (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2003; Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006). Understanding how culturally inclusive teaching is linked to performance is identified in the literature as a challenge for teachers (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Teachers’ beliefs and philosophical approaches are acknowledged as integral to valuing the culture of students (e.g., Corson,

1998; Cummins, 1986; Delpit & Perry, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Positive student-teacher relationships are further highlighted in the literature as an influential component in students' organisation and plans for their learning to be successful, and are an important background to this study (Alton-Lee, 2003; Muijs & Reynolds, 2001). In particular developing strong student-teacher relationships has been identified as a critical factor for developing effective pedagogy in schools located in low socioeconomic communities (Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington, & Sutherland, 2002; Hawk, Tumana-Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2010; Sutherland, 2004). After tracking secondary school students over several years, researchers have found that students who formed strong school relationships had higher educational expectations and were more likely to be involved in post-compulsory education two years after finishing school (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Wimberley, 2002). A positive relationship with a teacher, administrator or counsellor who was interested and available to students helped drive them to pursue their education and career objectives. How open teachers are to reformulating their roles and that of their learners to accommodate this ongoing educational planning relationship, is an important consideration of this study.

The Research and the Researcher

The study is situated within an interpretive framework and employs a qualitative case study approach which will enable an exploration of the intricacies and subtleties of the development and implementation of PEP, the phenomenon of interest in the study (Merriam, 1998). A long term interest in how students are supported in their educational development and future planning at school is the source of this thesis. This interest started through my own education and persists after more than two decades of teaching across the secondary and tertiary sectors. The first loop of experience played out as a student and allowed a particular perspective that developed into a conceptual and theoretical interest in how students navigate their learning, performance and achievement and generate their plans for student future learning. An interchange of personal experience and theoretical knowledge therefore underscores my position as a qualitative researcher in problematising personal educational planning.

bell hooks has explained how qualitative researchers have been guilty of 'othering' in the way the 'them' and 'us' dichotomy has been reinforced in the processes and outcomes of the research:

I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine. ... I am still author, authority.

I am still (the) coloniser, the speaking subject and you are now at the centre of my talk. (hooks, 1990, p. 242)

This alerts me to the need to maintain “an ingrained habit of viewing [my] own beliefs” throughout the current study (Gouldner, 1970, p. 490), and also to state my assumptions and position explicitly at the outset. As a Pakeha researcher I acknowledge that my particular cultural perspectives have some bearing on my understandings. This is particularly significant in that I am carrying out research within a multicultural school and community.

Early School Days

My own educational planning at secondary school in the 1970s proved to be a haphazard affair. Though a sense of uncertainty in my subject choosing and pathway through school prevailed, I was not aware that I needed advice. Moreover, I accepted the narrowly prescribed choices offered by my school, never questioning the underlying notion of meritocratic determination (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996). Instead I rolled in and out of the tide from one school year to the next, lapping about with some sort of naïve orientation that I was on the ‘right’ track. After all wasn’t secondary school about judging students’ performance in terms of assessment? If I survived that, then the authority of the school, its culture and management practices could slide alongside me at a safe distance.

Amongst my peers there was a perceived disconnect between what happened at school and what future choices might hold. A career as a teacher, nurse, secretary or if an exceptional girl, in medicine, were the same options from which my sister had chosen ten years earlier. Apprenticeships and law were for boys. Pathways within school were set for us. Some girls in the commercial stream, that group destined for secretarial positions, would later become very successful PAs or business owners. However, this outcome, as it was with the group in the professional stream, was the result of post school activity rather than planning. The most common underlying feature of all our schooling was the lack of educational guidance within school and beyond it.

School communication channels to parents did not offer informative material. School reports were a place for making judgments rather than a source of insight or academic guidance with their meaningless subject one liners; ‘good’ ‘works well’ ‘talkative’, ‘not working to capacity’. The only column that seemed important was place in class, provoking anxiety about not being good enough ... but good enough for what? With the occasional exception, the sacred parent/teacher interview (where student attendance was out of the

question) also seemed to shed little light on how an educational pathway could be navigated. There was a part-time ‘careers’ advisor in my school with a stark office and unwelcoming presence who was known to be a ‘hopeless teacher’; it probably suited her that she had few visitors. Outside experts, with the exception of those involved in ‘mother and daughter’ sexuality evenings, rarely contributed to the school milieu. Questions and problems encountered around school studies fell to the trustworthy domain of the teachers, although I cannot recall any teacher who had a direct interest in our biographies or life-courses.

My parents, like many of their generation, were committed to the enterprise of education but in the main left the detail of it to the system. How I was supported in my school studies and what I wanted to do in the invisible future was rarely questioned. I do however remember feeling a youthful energy and enthusiasm for all the possibilities of that future. This is a distinction that I later revisit. As post-school options drew closer, the only unwritten rule was that I, like my siblings and friends would be leaving town as soon as my school career was over, to seek brighter pastures. Remaining in my home town was only for those with low expectations. Perhaps I have idealised this phase of my life unduly, yet the opportunities in that outside world seemed to exist in a diffuse and remote way. There was no foundation upon which to question our school pathways, nor to experience and gain strategies that could be put into practice beyond school.

In reality some of my friends were perceived as problem students and did not conform to the rigid sorting tools our school offered for future career orientations. Without the ‘right’ subjects or the ‘right’ disposition towards what I later came to understand was mainstream schooling, they dropped out. Other subtle realities that prevailed were the silence of the Tongan girls in my classes and the attitudes many of the teachers seemed to have around the schooling of my Māori friends, but these realities were not consciously understood at the time. Throughout our schooling we passively waited for our rightful place in adult life, a process that served to deny generations of young New Zealanders agency over their educational pathways. Any view that our investment in secondary education was directly allied to the nation’s growth and productivity (Bassett & King, 2001; Marshall, 2000) was closed off to us. This purpose of schooling (Grace, 1990) which by default became my own, remained at a distance until much later when I could find in history points of argument and analysis.

Teaching

Becoming a secondary school art teacher gave me the opportunity to develop a more critical view of the educational experience I had encountered at secondary school. University study had initiated an understanding of the role of education in social reproduction, advantaging some and disadvantaging others (Bourdieu, 1984; McKenzie et al., 1996). An awareness of certain discourses in government agendas enabled me to gain a more informed understanding of the complexities of the factors through which my educational identity and those of my peers had been fashioned. Optimistic that my school-girl foretaste of personal educational planning would be markedly improved upon by the 1980s, I was soon to get a shock. On the first day of teaching in a large multi-cultural South Auckland school I discovered that my form class was called 3A1. There once more was the opportunity/success equation reinforced by the practice of streaming and distribution in a legitimated practice of classification (Fry, 1985; Jones, 1986; McKenzie, 1987). Only two students in the class of 30 were not Pakeha. Nowhere were the realities of short and long term outcomes for certain groups more apparent than in the low decile schools in which I worked over the next decade. It appeared that practices of categorisation and selection in the secondary school sector continued to define parameters and shape outcomes (Brown & Lauder, 1997; Jones, 1986). Moreover, how the educational aspirations and plans of secondary students were owned, scaffolded and supported both within and beyond school was as unclear as they were in my youth.

Throughout my career as a teacher educator I have continued to ask my students whether they felt they had received ongoing effective academic and educational guidance and whether there was a consistent person at their school who had oversight of their educational planning. Anecdotally, even in this second decade of the 21st century, less than 10% have consistently affirmed experiencing such support. The majority of those who felt supported as students reported that it was just one teacher who gave them academic guidance and direction, not the organisational structures and patterns of their secondary schooling.

Even though today's global students expect more from their educational planning at school and into the future, whether secondary schools have made important advances in accommodating these new conditions and challenges is an issue. Moreover, students have not been asked what they think of their current educational planning support. Seeking out such clarity is a point of focus for this study.

The Significance of the Research Topic

Personal educational planning (PEP) is an essential process for students to navigate pathways at school and into the future (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Gough et al., 2003; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), and if facilitated appropriately can support and scaffold students' educational plans (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Oliver & Spokane, 1998; Robertson & Norrie, 2011), leading to improved outcomes (Smith, 2010; Torgerson et al., 2008). While research findings in New Zealand about components of PEP are at an early stage (e.g., McKinley et al., 2009) secondary schools are gaining traction in the area. This has led to calls to address a gap in the research that investigates the perceptions and experiences of those who are involved in PEP, how it is defined and built, and the support with which students are provided (Robertson & Norrie, 2011).

Student Voice

The current study has been developed to give prominence to the largely unheard voices of the students, and to their perceptions and experiences. It was hoped that by investigating their experiences and perceptions of PEP, valuable insights would be gained into their practices, agency and the manner in which PEP was both constructed and had impacted on them. This will address an identified lacuna in the literature (Carnell, 2000; Cowie, 2005; Ormond, 2006). Also missing to a great extent in the research, are detailed accounts from teachers and parents of how they have interpreted the systems that have been put in place for PEP and how far these have translated into practice within the secondary school domain. Accordingly, those who interfaced with the students through the PEP process such as parents, teachers, deans and others were asked about their perceptions and experiences, adding a significant dimension to how PEP operates in this study. Specifically the research has sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the perceived and intended purposes of PEP within a senior secondary school context?
- What processes and procedures are employed to support PEP within a senior secondary school context?
- What kinds of synergising effects exist in this process and are they embedded in the mission and goals of the school?
- What are secondary school students' experiences and perceptions of PEP?
- What impact does PEP have on senior secondary school students?

The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter One introduces the research through a brief survey of the researcher's interest and positioning with regard to the research process. In order to support the rationale for the research, the study is contextualised within the wider educational policy agenda and situated within the New Zealand context. The significance and importance of the research topic is addressed and the research questions presented. An overview of the thesis chapters concludes the chapter.

Chapters Two and Three review the literature relevant to the role and function of the processes and activities associated with PEP. Chapter Two explores selected literature that examines the historical relationship between secondary schooling, work and the social contract of education. The chapter traces discursive shifts in policy development and their implications for the practices, choices and experiences of secondary students in their educational planning. New Zealand guidance and educational support services are explored and aspects of student agency in relation to the secondary school system are addressed. Chapter Three examines a shift from the locus of control residing with the teacher, to a partnership between student and teacher with attention paid to a combination of school practices, relationships and support systems. The potential of these systems to maximise student motivation, self-efficacy and self-regulation is considered. How students navigate variable structures and interact with complex relationships is examined through an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Drawing from the literature on the nature of various interacting systems, events and actions, the chapter proposes an organised picture of the intentions of PEP.

Chapter Four reports on the research process and procedures employed. The research questions are revisited and the selection of an interpretive paradigm is justified. The rationale for the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is given, sampling techniques are justified and descriptions of the research participants and the data collection methods used are included. The methods of analysis employed are outlined and evaluative criteria for appraising the trustworthiness of qualitative research addressed. Finally ethical issues as they relate to the current study are explained. Within this chapter the case study school is introduced to situate it demographically and in terms of its decile rating. From this information it is possible to recognise that a high percentage of the student population would be identified as priority learners. This is reflected in the composition of the participants in the study.

Chapter Five through to Chapter Seven report on the research findings. In Chapters Five and Six, Phase One of the research is analysed. The former, which identifies perceived and intended purposes of PEP, reports three dimensions of PEP relevant to the teachers and parents in the study. These are the philosophical bases (those of the school and Māori kaupapa) that underpin the PEP processes, the focus on developing independent self-regulated student learners, and the systems, processes and procedures involved in supporting PEP. Chapter Six initially draws on a PEP survey of 509 senior students and through the survey identifies nine disengaged students, nine semi-engaged students and nine engaged students. Interview responses from these students are examined to search for patterns and differences in student experiences and self-reported practices. The impact of PEP on the students is also detailed. Chapter Seven, centered on the data collected during Phase Two of the research, provides a vignette of three students from the three salient groups relating to how each navigated and experienced PEP over a period of eighteen months. Patterns of motivation and self-regulation are examined and opportunities the school provided for the three students to develop their PEP are presented through the reported beliefs, understandings and practices of the students, their parents/caregivers and their teachers.

Chapter Eight synthesises and applies insights from the earlier chapters and the critical literature to analyse the findings from Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This chapter is structured around three themes extracted from the data. These themes are: opportunities for student agency in managing their PEP; parents' roles and engagement in student learning partnerships; and students' efficacy beliefs in becoming self-regulated learners.

In the final chapter, Chapter Nine, conclusions are drawn in regard to the research questions. Implications for changing twenty-first century schools to rethink and reconstitute roles responsibilities and systems are discussed. The challenges particularly facing priority learners in their PEP are reviewed. Areas for future research are then identified. The chapter concludes by drawing attention to the study's contribution to the field.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Learner: Position and Educational Change

Dominant understandings of the purpose of education are historically and ideologically contingent and reflect wider social, political and economic forces. They also have implications for how schooling is experienced. Changes in the purpose of post-primary schooling in New Zealand from its early beginnings to the present day have been shaped by such factors as the expansion and accommodation of a broader educational clientele in the 1940s and 1950s, the diversity of school populations, and the shifting significance of credentials in a context of marketisation and competition. A number of factors and forces directly and indirectly impinge on how today's students engage with and plan for their future in the secondary school system and beyond. These same considerations influence the guidance and educational services that have evolved to assist students to this end and underscore the degree of consultation and ownership afforded to students in defining their educational pathways.

The first section of this chapter makes explicit the complexity of understandings surrounding the purpose of schooling in New Zealand. The nature of discursive changes and their implications for choices made, or made available, and practices experienced by students in secondary schooling as they have charted the sites and parameters of their educational planning, are also examined. Possibilities for students to make decisions, seize opportunities, view their progress, and have some control over the ways in which their educational planning unfolds at school and beyond are central. The potential for agency is therefore a significant feature of this analysis.

Schools are shaped by and respond to understandings of the purposes of schooling in particular ways. Secondary schools cannot improve student engagement with their educational planning by merely adding a further strategy. Furthermore, given the diverse nature of schools and the heterogeneous nature of school populations, decisions about the most appropriate way forward will vary. The second section of this chapter begins with a discussion of the guidance and educational support services that have been developed in New Zealand and the unsystematic nature in which these were made available to students in schools. An important focus is how students have been situated in relation to the support services offered, and aspects of student agency as they relate to educational planning are

addressed. National and international research findings are reported to highlight how some students have been underserved by the secondary school system with particular attention being given to how students are located in relation to diversity in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

This chapter seeks to demonstrate and argue that, though it is central to nearly every aspect of schooling, student navigation of their educational planning is not a transparent or straightforward process. More attention has to be paid to positioning students' needs and issues at the centre, in order to make the transition through school successful. Rethinking and reconstituting roles, responsibilities and systems is a necessary start.

The Purpose(s) of Schooling: A Shifting Discourse

The evolving purposes and underlying assumptions of schooling have been debated since organised state provision began (Hattie & Anderman, 2013). The political ideology of any manifesto that underpins policy and state direction entwines schooling purposes with economic and social progress. Its expression in varying historical and geographical contexts has implications for the development and operation of education, which then impacts student opportunities to plan for their educational and post-educational careers.

The Student, the System and the World of Work

State education in New Zealand, developed from the 1867 Native Schools Act and the 1877 Education Act, provided basic primary schooling for most children. Both systems were to support national cohesion and prosperity, social control and conformity, and a supposedly egalitarian society based on democratic citizenship (Adams, Clark, Codd, & Waitere-Ang, 2000; Stephenson, 2008, 2009). However secondary education was available only to those whose parents could afford it or for those in district high schools where establishment of a higher class provided an extra year of instruction (Lee, 2005). A small number of Māori denominational boarding schools were also in place. The early grammar schools that followed the British classical academic tradition created an early dimension of privilege in the country (Sutherland, Jesson, & Peters, 2001). As state secondary schooling developed, it established a structure through which students would be allocated to seemingly appropriate vocational destinations (Mackey, 1967).

When George Hogben was appointed Inspector-General of Education in 1899, he introduced technical education initiatives and a credentialing structure which maintained the hierarchy of privilege. Free places in grammar schools were available to pupils who passed the Certificate of Proficiency examination while a lesser credential, the Certificate of

Competency, limited free-place options to technical programmes (Stephenson, 2008). Other forms of differentiation occurred. The Māori denominational schools were investigated with a view to preventing an academic curriculum being offered. The assumption for working class and Māori students was that vocational education was most suitable and would contribute to New Zealand economically (Mackey, 1967). Girls were to receive domestic training to prepare them for supposedly natural futures as wives, mothers and domestic servants (Fry, 1985).

Attempts to reduce secondary schooling to a narrowly selective function were challenged, however. Technical and district high schools often insisted on providing academic options, responding to the belief of many parents and employers that the university matriculation examination was the only worthwhile qualification (Lee & Lee, 2008). With this increased focus on credentials, the transition from primary to secondary school, and then to the workforce, was understood and explained by reference to the notion of what was later termed meritocracy (Young, 1958). Young people were allocated to their 'rightful' place on the basis of their supposed ability and the amount of effort they were believed to have put into their study (Brown & Lauder, 1997). While reward by merit was believed to create a more egalitarian society, it actually concealed the selective nature of the education system (McKenzie, 1987) through implicitly legitimating non-merit factors such as social capital (Bourdieu, 1997), the cumulative benefits of inheritance, the availability of jobs and discrimination of all forms (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Most specifically, ascribed characteristics such as class and ethnicity privileged some students in the formal examinations and disadvantaged others, ensuring that qualifications continued to act as a social filter (Beeby, 1986).

Investment in Secondary Education

The philosophies of John Maynard Keynes contributed to the establishment of New Zealand's welfare state with its so-called 'cradle to the grave' support for citizens under the country's first labour government elected in 1935 (Jesson, 1995). The welfare state regulated the economic system and infrastructure provided welfare and social systems now called New Zealand Fordism (Maharey, 2007). By 1937, with the abolition of the proficiency examination, state-funded secondary education had become the right of every child under Minister of Education Peter Fraser, whose vision for education typified a commitment to the liberal ideal of equality of educational opportunity (Bassett & King, 2001). Education's share in increased state welfare expenditure supported the view that

investment in secondary education was directly allied to the nation's growth and productivity and tertiary education was available to those who passed the relevant examinations.

The prevailing ideology of liberalism underpinned the direction of education until the late 1980s. Economic growth was seen to be the key to alleviating society's inequalities and irregularities (Shuker, 1987), and education to be the means of promoting intellectual, moral and spiritual literacy. As a public good, and linked to the idea of the social contract (Rousseau, 1762), education was a mechanism for securing a balance between an individual's rights and the obligations which would provide mutual benefit for all. Liberal ideals were expressed through the focus on learner needs, interests and experiences that were central elements of the progressivism that had gained momentum in the early 1900s (Dewey, 1933). They were equally embedded in the humanist belief in the unique worth of every human being and an educational concern for developing the whole child, open to change and continued learning, individuality and self-directedness (Maslow, 1976). These ideals were, however, undermined by the nature of labour force divisions and inequalities, that reflected the class structure and was reflected in conditions of work in different sectors of the economy (Scott & Freeman-Moir, 2006). With a curriculum and credentials supposedly available to all students, the hegemonic nature of the meritocratic ideology continued to perpetuate the common myth that New Zealand was an open society with equally distributed opportunities for social mobility. Thus differences in educational outcome and occupational success continued to be seen as the result of differences in the abilities and efforts of individuals, and schooling continued as a site of struggle between those demanding social selectivity and those wanting social equality (Codd, 1985).

With the introduction of the School Certificate examination and the raising of the school leaving age to 15, adolescents who would have dropped out of school in previous years stayed on and schools were required to cater for this new type of client. A review of the secondary education curriculum in 1944, the Thomas Report, was premised on a vision of citizenship in which all students were to be treated equally. The report proposed a common core curriculum for the early secondary school years that would meet the needs of "the non-academically minded" as well as opportunities for later individualised subject choices to cater for the interests of the "intellectually bright minority" (Thomas, 1944, p. 8). This remained foundational to the educational experiences of students, including the post-war

baby boomers, during the 1950s and 1960s, when expansion of production, economic boom and full employment was the norm (Shuker, 1987).

In the post-war period education assumed a key role, contributing to the unprecedented sense of economic and social progress, with state responsibility combining principles of prosperity, security and opportunity for the burgeoning number of young people in New Zealand (Brown & Lauder., 1997). A commission of inquiry into education concluded that the system was steadily progressing towards the realisation of its objective of equality of opportunity (Currie, 1962). The intervention of the state as the dominant provider and controller of services was uncritically considered to be beneficial and therefore worthy of on-going support (Ray, 2009). Parents were expected to trust professionals and accept that teachers knew what was best for their children (Le Grand, 1996). The Commission proposed the expansion of education into other areas of civil society recommending more polytechnic education, community colleges and guidance counselling.

Students' Educational Pathways Emerge as a Problem

Because education, the state, and the economy were so intertwined, signs of stress became evident in education when the economy came under crisis in the 1970s. This was precipitated in part by the loss of the country's biggest export market with Britain's entry into the European Economic Community. Faced also with massive overseas debt accrued in attempts to finance large-scale energy-related projects to mediate the effects of the global oil crisis, the country had been brought close to bankruptcy. Cutbacks in state services, particularly welfare and health, exacerbated the effects of severe poverty. The restructuring of state owned enterprises and the replacement of people with technology in industry had created high levels of unemployment. Students could no longer leave school at 15 for jobs in the railway, factories, freezing works or the Ministry of Works. There were no jobs. Anticipation of a relatively seamless school to work transition was no longer a reality and a 10-13 year educational career became the norm. This rupture in the transition from school to work, a competitive work environment and the need to gain more skills in education, created greater demands and expectations for students to be more actively engaged in their educational planning.

Schooling could no longer be regarded as a mechanism for generating social equality (Nash, 1983; Ray, 2009) and became understood as being simultaneously responsible for social and economic problems as well as the key to economic prosperity (Drucker, 1993). Without Britain's guaranteed support, the country was obliged to raise its performance to be a

competitive player in the global economy. State monopoly of education could not guarantee an incentive to improve, and a radically reformed competitive system came to be seen as a viable alternative. In the final decades of the twentieth century, New Zealand experienced a shift from a political philosophy that accepted a balance between individual freedom and state intervention as fundamental to securing social justice, to one of neoliberalism, and its developments in third and fourth way politics. The alignment of education in an increasingly competitive global economy with target focused outcomes has had implications for the ways in which students approach their educational pathways. The tensions between economic and societal needs and expectations have been expressed in the rhetoric of education for lifelong learning and increasing responsibility on the individual for determining future opportunities.

The link between social class of origin, access to school credentials and occupational destination had become a major concern in the sociology of education (Dale, 2000; Lauder & Hughes, 1990). The factors and processes that shaped opportunity to access qualifications were recognised as having continuing currency in the employment hierarchy (Nash et al., 1992; Thrupp, 1999), especially when credentialing processes rewarded an academic curriculum as the most valuable knowledge (Jesson, 2001). In such a system, Bourdieu (1984) argued, those endowed with the most effective financial, social and cultural resources have greater opportunities for success. Those with limited access to such resources and success may internalise – through history, structure and socialisation – a constrained sense of what is realistically available to them, and leave school poorly prepared to take on more than manual, domesticating and low status occupations. Others, with different understandings and expectations, are able to access that education which would allow them to go to university and into the professions. If differential success was a product of secondary schooling in the country's history, personal agency in planning their futures for those secondary students without the resources that would promise a successful 'fit' was rendered irrelevant.

Although for a large part of the twentieth century the state had shaped and controlled schooling and the parameters for PEP and career options of its secondary school students, secondary schools now had to serve a very different set of needs and demands as students' navigation of their educational plans and pathways began to emerge as a problem. Those privileged by elite destination options continued to be rewarded just as the growing numbers of those disabled by it were disadvantaged. Ironically both shared a lack of understanding of

the school system and a lack of agency as learners for the future. The overarching ownership of educational destination therefore remained in the schooling purposes of the state's choices and was played out through the success/failure sorting mechanisms of the credentialing system. Those choices were to be further realigned when political expectations of schooling changed.

The Student and the Neoliberal State

The adoption of neoliberalism (Hayek, 1978) in the 1980s by many western governments saw ideas about modern technology, globalisation and occupations in terms of the expectations of the global knowledge economy or the knowledge society (Drucker, 1993; Pring, 1989; Reich, 1992). The underpinning philosophy of liberalism (which included neoliberalism and economic rationalism) was that of a competitive, possessive form of individualism that emphasised freedom over equality and individual freedoms over community freedoms (Peters & Marshall, 1996). A defining element was the nature of the restructuring of education (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986; Codd, 2008) as US, European and Asian politicians positioned education at the centre of their policy agendas and political platforms (Robertson, 2007). Neoliberals argued for a return to a system based on meritocracy, providing credentials for the marketplace, although whether it had gone away was contentious. They equated equality of opportunity with falling standards in schools and placed emphasis on a competitive market model of education (Grace, 1990). The purpose of schooling in this model was the learning of skills, knowledge and values that contributed to business and individual pursuits. Growth depended on maximising competition and allowing market principles to permeate all aspects of life.

In the globalising era between the years 1975-2008 (Standing, 2013) New Zealand became a fully participating part of the global economy and neoliberalism continued as an influential force to be confronted by successive governments (Kelsey, 2001). In a period of fiscal crisis the interventionist policies of Keynesian welfarism were no longer viable and new arrangements for managing the public service sector, including education, were introduced. Within schools, the knowledges and instructional practices of the previous era were considered insufficient to meet the knowledge needs of students of the day (Levin, 2000). The policy *Tomorrow's Schools* (Department of Education, 1988), outlined how schools were expected to produce highly educated citizens who were abstract thinkers with flexible skills that could bring products and concepts to completion. This was in response to requirements for meeting the new repertoire of destinations that had been signalled for

secondary students in an earlier Treasury (1987) document. Specifically, the policy was “to enable citizens to acquire the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary for them to participate fully within, and to make an effective contribution to, the knowledge society” (TEC, 2000, p. 11). On the other hand, the lower skilled workers would be casual labour if required (Jesson, 2001). Secondary students and their communities expected more diverse educational options with flexible pathways to qualifications, and recognition of a greater range of skills and knowledge for lifelong learning. Whether secondary schools could deliver the systems to accommodate these aspirations was less clear. Moreover the conservative structural constraints of secondary schools, which already seemed poorly organised to accommodate change, were significant. Under pressure and still with their traditions of classical and vocational education intact, secondary schools were preoccupied with the struggle of meeting the neoliberal agenda of devolution, decentralisation and accountability. The notion that students’ destinations were now embedded in a global framework seemed to go beyond their responsibility.

Commodification and Choice

The neoliberal educational aim was the citizen of the market, freed from state intervention, innovative and focused on the immediate (Easton, 1989; Grace, 1990; Treasury, 1987). Local schools were under pressure to prioritise systems and strategies appropriate to their particular contexts and the demands of their communities in the market of educational opportunities (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Oliver & Spokane, 1998). Focus was on appointing boards of trustees for the new community environment and engaging in competition to permeate the once amicable relationship with neighbouring schools for those now called clients in the educational market (Fiske & Ladd, 2000). This reflected the impact of ‘commodification’, a central aspect of globalisation that subjected education and its users to market forces without effective agency or a capacity to resist (Dale & Robertson, 2007). Parents were considered to be consumers of education, and rights were constructed in consumer terms as families chose schools or education providers for their children in the local, global or regional marketplace. In theory this right to choose suggested students would have more choices over their pathways at secondary school. In practice, students’ parents might have chosen schools under the competing natural laws of the free market (Kelsey, 2001) but did not have an equal ability to realise this choice (Ball, 2003). Provision of such different education experiences to meet the perceived need of different groups of students has long been a characteristic of Australian schools also, where ‘choice’ and

market operations determine who gets what in education (Hayes, 2012, p. 642). Thus, polarisation of school populations in certain areas has become the norm.

Moreover, senior secondary school students could not leave school at the minimum age and expect to obtain well paid semi-skilled or unskilled occupations (Strathdee, 2001). Whereas ensuring a good fit between the product of the schools and the demands of the labour market had been a relatively unchallenged focus of government policy prior to the economic crisis, with widespread youth unemployment becoming evident by the 1980s, different solutions needed to be found. The neoliberal state's greatly diminished ability to mediate the market's over-riding commercial ethos with its tendency to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a few, presented problems for how students engaged with their PEP. Not all students could access the economic, political and social resources of society (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). How students planned their education at school and beyond emerged as an increasingly pressing issue.

Students who were already structurally disadvantaged had to cope in an environment that no longer guaranteed work in lower strata positions. Other western democracies were also experiencing similar shifts in the labour market. Hayes (2012) has referred to Australian working class students having to exchange their labour for poorly paid tasks they were once able to fill in the industrial economy. As in the New Zealand context, Hayes has noted that educational credentials hold greater significance now than they previously did, especially for this group of students. This is exacerbated by the fact that these students are in schools that already operate under difficult circumstances in the current market model. It is often these young people who are least supported by the dominant structures of education and are more likely to be disengaged from the context with the likelihood of experiencing poor outcomes (Hayes, 2012).

Transition Education and Disadvantaged Groups

In response to critiques from learners and employers that schools were not preparing students adequately for the world of work (Pring, 2006) a focus for the 1980s was greater relevance in schooling. In 1984 the New Zealand Government Transition Education Committee released its interim report which stated that education was "concerned with the transition from school to a constructive adult life" (1984, p. 3). It was the conclusion of the committee that the existing transition education system did not meet the needs of disadvantaged New Zealanders. As a result there was an increase and diversification of transition services many of which, in the absence of significant job creation, kept young

people in limbo while raising their hopes of being employed (Gordon, 1996). This was exacerbated by the structural impact of advanced technology on the international economy and a declining welfare base (McKenzie et al., 1996). It became more common in the depressed labour markets to find young New Zealanders remaining in schools as ‘discouraged workers’, drifting through secondary school without clear aims, sceptical of the value of qualifications but uncertain about entering a labour market characterised by youth unemployment (Strathdee, 2001).

Prior to 1986, the median income for 15–25 year-old New Zealanders was \$14,700 a year. By 2000 this same group earned \$8,100 and youth suicides were higher than in comparable countries (Boshier, 2000). This reflected the negative effects of an increasing gap between the rich and the escalating poverty of the poor. At the same time, evidence of the impact of educational inequality was being highlighted through the performance of many western nations in international comparisons of student achievement. As the UNICEF Innocenti Report (2002) recorded, New Zealand registered the second highest rate of educational inequality in the OECD, sending a message of falling educational standards, particularly in relation to numeracy and literacy, which were particularly detrimental to already-marginalised social groups (Hattie, 2003). This disadvantage fuelled questions regarding barriers to tertiary participation and success for students from low socioeconomic areas (Leach & Zepke, 2005; Thrupp, 1998). All of this came together as perceived failure of secondary schools to do a good job for the least successful (40% of the system in England, the large ‘tail’ of underachievement in the US and New Zealand) and prompted a governmental imperative to reconsider vocational policies, bringing to attention concerns already expressed in the fields of industry, employment and academic guidance (MacLure, 2006). However, what counted as appropriate standards and ways of supporting, guiding and advising secondary students, and the relation of different kinds of learning to economic success and learning beyond school, were not universally agreed.

By the twenty-first century the social cost of the free market was viewed as destructive and competitive. A sense of change was evident in the New Zealand electorate and the Labour party developed a policy called *The Third Way*, influenced by sociologist Anthony Giddens (Kelsey, 2001). Giddens had proposed new directions for nations that were intended to be more inclusive of all people and supportive of business. It was an ideal of equality of opportunity for the technological, post industrialist society committed to inclusiveness and innovation. *The Third Way* also presented another layer of implications for what secondary

schooling should do and how it should be organised. The question was whether a balance could be found between the interests of the students and the democratic system alongside the economy and business.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) in *The Fourth Way* have argued that it is possible to have a well-performing education system that differs from market-driven educational policies and is built on shared responsibility, trust and professionalism. In their view the Third Way educational reforms involved raising the bar and narrowing the gap to improve achievement scores in literacy and mathematics, irrespective of cultures or countries. In contrast they argue the capacity building of the Fourth Way is more concerned with communities developing and defining their own moral purposes and shared visions for self-directed growth and development. They claim that the fourth way has a commitment to a community's own compelling purposes. Sahlberg (2011) has argued that what is behind the success of the Finnish educational system, is not a reliance on competition, choice and external testing of students, but a focus on enhancing trust in teachers and schools, professionalising teachers' work and developing instructional leadership in schools. The nature of this success, according to Sahlberg (2011), is not the result of any major reform of education, but has been based on the "continual adjustment of schooling to the changing needs of individuals and society" (p. 131).

In contrast the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) has evolved from increasing international exchanges of policies and practices and relies on the assumption that competition between schools, teachers and students is the most successful way to raise the quality of education. This movement has been characterised by the reinforcement of educational standards, benchmarks and indicators for teaching and learning, and prescribed curricula. Globalising concerns around standards to 'fix' economic problems through producing a labour force 'fit for purpose' in the knowledge economy (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 73) have put secondary schools under pressure to ensure their standards are continually rising. Increased focus on core subjects such as numeracy and literacy (Hargreaves, 2003; Jennings & Stark Rentner, 2006), high stakes accountability, and the transfer of models from the corporate world are further characteristics of GERM. Some researchers have argued the rise in East Asian success in the 2012 OECD PISA Report can be attributed to the competition, standardisation and frequent testing of GERM (Zhao, 2013), where entire societies are devoted to ensuring students become excellent test takers.

The Precariat Student

In much of the literature there is debate about globalisation's genuine contribution to the growth of world democracy through a market oriented approach and the extent to which the role of nations in global politics is displaced and authority supplanted by the multinational organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Brown & Lauder, 1997; Robertson, 2007). Other themes highlighted and disagreements discussed in the literature are about fostering homogenisation of society as opposed to celebrating diversity, and the extent of a corporatist agenda for the elite, countered by the world's working classes and the poor (Schwandt, 2007). Standing (2012) has argued that increasing competitiveness, meritocratic ideals, and flexibility has had the effect of transferring risks and insecurity onto workers and their families, resulting in minimal trust relationships with capital or the state. In his view the effect is two-fold; insecurity about the permanence of employment in positions at risk because of minimal labour protection; and uncertainty about long-term career development or security, in positions that lack occupational identity and state-supported entitlement or status. Standing's claim is that neoliberal policies and institutional changes have produced sufficiently common experiences in at least a quarter of the adult population in most countries, for them to constitute a new emerging class. Labelled the "precariat" (Standing, 2012, p. 21) and consisting of both migrants and locals, the growth of this class was accelerated by the financial meltdown of 2008-9 which put more pressure on firms to cut labour costs. Whether as students these people had agency in terms of their PEP at school is questionable. The issue of living and working across the world precariously suggests poor provision of future advice and guidance at school. Standing has contended that this new class could produce instability in society, and become increasingly frustrated or dangerous because they have no voice and hence they are vulnerable to extreme political parties. All of these tensions can be viewed as a highly complex set of social forces and patterns which have changed over time and underpinned the educational landscape for secondary school students. An examination of the establishment of support and guidance services within that landscape offers a way of thinking historically, not only about the construction of what a student's PEP might consist of, but about the sorts of rationale that have driven its development and have influenced students over time.

The Emergence of Student Support Programmes in the Twentieth Century

According to Hughes and Karp (2004) the guidance profession started at the same time as the compulsory education movement. Louis and Gordon (2006) have reported that school

guidance in US was initially provided by middle class women on a voluntary basis until regular systems of school based services were in place. Student support professionals were first a feature of schooling in the US in the early 1900s as a result of economic, social and political events emerging from the industrial revolution (Herr, 2000). Within this system the vocational education movement began a trend toward student differentiation and early guidance professionals used this to administer their systems. A principal, Jesse Davis was the first to provide a systematic school guidance programme in 1907 by encouraging English teachers to use lessons that related to career interests and that developed character (School Counselor, n.d.). Frank Parsons, known for applying a more scientific model to career guidance, established the Bureau of Vocational Guidance in 1908 to assist young people making the transition from school to work. He set the following guide:

In a wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. (Parsons, as cited in Phillips & Paziienza, 1988, p. 2)

From the 1920s to the 1930s, school counselling grew in the US due to the rise of progressive education in schools which emphasised personal, moral and social development. Economic and social pressures gave impetus to the development of systems of vocational guidance, with processes of industrialisation as important economic drivers . Pressure from the arrival of immigrants entering schools and the workforce also resulted in a school guidance response to the expanding role of schools in producing citizens for growing industrial and multifaceted societies.

The guidance movement in Australia began in the late 1920s as educators looked to initiatives introduced in Britain and America (Wright, 2012). Different forms of guidance would provide solutions to a range of educational, economic and social problems. Educational guidance was to assist students with secondary school placement, vocational guidance was to secure employment and social guidance fell into the realm of treating emotional, psychological and behavioural problems (Wright, 2012). Educational guidance, viewed as key to catering for individual differences, was operationalised through the school counsellor network and had at its core mass intelligence testing, resulting in students being grouped by mental age rather than chronological age (Hughes, 2002). It was also closely

related to vocational guidance through which selection of a suitable course of study to meet student needs for their future working lives depended on teachers' and parents' decisions.

Student educational support in New Zealand had its genesis in international antecedents, particularly those of the US because of the considerable "flow of relevant literature from that country" (Winterbourn, 1974, p. 1). As in the US, Winterbourn notes, voluntary support preceded state provision of guidance services in New Zealand but with the expansion of secondary provision and the establishment of new employment opportunities, a new type of student experienced vocational education which, commanded by industry, included new curricular and career training. The mechanism in schools to assist individuals and groups to consider these new types of career was the guidance counsellor.

Guidance and counselling services in New Zealand secondary schools from the 1920s were undertaken primarily by teachers and then later by more specialised child welfare workers and career advisors (Brammer, 1985). Like the British model, extramural specialist support services centred on health, welfare and employment, and included "school medical officers, district nurses, visiting teachers, welfare officers, social workers, vocational guidance counsellors, and educational psychologists" (Besley, 2000, p. 181). The welfare state protection model, with its focus on democratic citizens, patriotic nationals and future workers ensured there was community and academic interest in the theory and practice of vocational guidance support to "assist individuals to recognise their assets and limitations and relate these to their choice of a career with its various constraints and prerequisites" (Small, 1984, p. 115). Such services reflected a meritocratic ideology and served the state's need to meet escalating labour market demands, rather than the interests and educational needs of the individual (McKenzie et al., 1996).

Expanding middle class occupations in industry throughout the twentieth century demanded that education take on the character of training, with rigorous early specialisation that linked closely to "the requirements of the [then] modern trades and professions" (Halsey & Floud, 1961, p. 9). To prepare and plan for such training, educational services in secondary schools needed to channel their students into appropriate pathways. Parents of children in state schools were expected to trust professionals and accept that teachers knew what was best for their children. Educational planning existed, but parents accepted the security offered by the state's vision for their children. While a career guidance focus endured as a key part of guidance programmes (Winterbourn, 1974), structural constraints such as school subject availability and selection processes, occupational recruitment policies, job availability and

labour market expectations of students in their transition from school into the labour market continued (Besley, 2000).

The increasing role of schools in managing the development of children and adolescents and guiding them towards adulthood and future citizenship continued into the 1960s. In the US new legislation and professional expectations refined the school counselling profession which by the 1970s had shifted from a profession of solitary professionals to a comprehensive development programme for all students (Hatch & Bowers, 2002; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997). In New Zealand focus was given to guidance networks in schools which, according to Small (1984), embraced notions of pastoral care, teachers getting to know students as individuals and being cognisant of any personal, social and educational difficulties they might be experiencing. Two or more full-time guidance counsellors were appointed to the largest secondary schools, while small schools might have access to the part-time services of only one. Renwick, the then New Zealand Director General of Education in his speech to the Counselling and Guidance Association meeting in 1981, cited opinions expressed in some schools that they would like to experiment with more deans in the network rather than adding more guidance counsellors (Brammer, 1985). This recommendation suggests that there were tensions around the nature and capacity of the guidance that was delivered. Furthermore, as with other countries, there was little personal educational support for students unless it was deemed to be in the interest of national efficiency.

A New Century

Traditional roles of counselling around career and academic issues had varying degrees of success in meeting twenty-first century expectations as school counsellors under pressure sought to expand their understanding of what vocational, academic support and engagement meant in terms of learning and student destinations (Hanson, 2002). In 2002 the American School Counselor Association released the first edition of the ASCA National Model, a framework for school counselling programmes comprising key school counselling components (Hatch & Bowers, 2002). Canada also adopted the ASCA model. The framework posited three functions; academic assistance, career planning (that is, life planning after school) and personal and social support. A programmatic approach was intended to help student support professionals show that each activity implemented as part of the programme was developed from careful monitoring and analysis of students' perceived needs and measured achievements, and related data (Hatch & Bowers, 2002).

Initially this new direction was viewed as controversial, rejecting as it did a previous focus on mental health as a foundation for personal development, but early reconceptualisations of students' PEP experiences began to appear in the American and British literature (e.g., Dykeman et al., 2003; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007).

The transformation of the counselling profession from marginal ancillary services to a comprehensive school counselling approach was not without difficulties. Hart and Jacobi (1992) had found in their study of American school counsellors that many were gate keepers to change, using inequitable practices based on deficit-based beliefs about a student's capacity to learn instead of advocating for the academic success of every student. The result was many students of colour, poor and working class students, those with disabilities and bilingual students were kept from getting rigorous coursework and academic advice. Skills legitimated at an institutional level as being required for successful high school graduation and post-secondary options, were always a focus for the counsellor. In Israel, Erhard and Harel's (2005) study of 600 counsellors found that their roles varied according to the preferences of principals, teachers and the counsellors themselves. Principals in Louis's American study knew little about what their student support personnel did other than the most obvious tasks of scheduling and handling persistent social problems (Louis, 2009). These researchers also found that job descriptions of counsellors had evolved in isolation from main school structures "without any centralised or rigorous assessment of their efficiency or effectiveness" (Louis & Gordon, 2006, p. 24). Other researchers suggested that career advisors needed access to systematic training to ensure that occupational knowledge was kept up to date (Munro & Elsom, 2000). An Australian study of 230 year 11 students found that those who could have benefitted most from seeking academic and career guidance did not, despite its availability (Warton, 1997). Furthermore few students had been asked directly about what they knew and needed to know regarding secondary school and career planning (see also Arrington, 2000; Gibbons, Borders, Wiles, & Davis, 2006). A systematic review of the research (1988-2004) in the UK by the University of London's Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI) found that access to high quality information, advice and guidance tailored to meet adolescents' needs, was crucial if government targets for timely post-school employment were to be met (Smith, Lilley, Marris, & Krechowicka, 2005). These researchers found "provision of information about post-16 options is patchy. It needs to be designed in a way that is relevant and appropriate to its target audience" (p. 3).

The Counselling 'Gap' in Aotearoa/New Zealand

New Zealand literature offers little critique of existing structures and practices, and no coherent plan for how guidance staff, support professionals and teachers might assist students in navigating their educational pathways at school and beyond. The 1990s has been described by Hermansson (1999) as one of immense pressure for counsellors due to the expansion and diversity of people and roles. The resulting disorganisation had resulted in counsellors and their student support colleagues being perceived as onlookers or even outsiders in the process of school change. Resilience of traditional role expectations of guidance and career counsellors has meant that academic support has not been a priority, excepting when career paths were signalled by advisors. Inadequate levels of services to support students' PEP have often been accepted uncritically. This is perhaps not surprising given that one or two counsellors or advisors have been expected to serve hundreds of students in their decision-making in any one school. What appears clear from the literature is that support networks have not been integral to the overall school's education programme, leaving individual vocational counselling, for example, at the periphery – too indirect and diffuse to have an effective impact on students' PEP.

Pilot career programmes in schools, focusing on year 10 students in 75 participating schools, became part of the government's aim to assist young people in making more successful transitions from school to higher education training or work (ERO, 2006). Students were required to complete a Learning and Career Plan (LCP) to support learning about a lifelong process of planning future directions. Another pilot for 100 schools - Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL) developed programmes, resources and systems to build staff capability (ERO, 2007). Others helped students make informed decisions about school courses and programmes to meet their individual needs (e.g., Hipkins & Bolstad, 2005; Wylie & Hipkins, 2006). Vaughan and Gardiner (2007) identified haphazard career guidance delivery in New Zealand schools, and, recognising the limitations of the school-to-labour market model of young people's transition to study, training and employment, Vaughan and Roberts (2007) argued for an approach that focused on "the dual 'production' of identity and career to augment analyses of transition and career development" (p. 91). The Competent Children, Competent Learners project, a longitudinal study which focuses on a group of about 500 young people from the greater Wellington region, was funded by the MOE and NZCER. Commenced in 1993 initially to provide New Zealand policy makers with a study which could show the impact of early childhood experiences, this project has also provided data on career perceptions in secondary school.

In the study, 41% of secondary students said they had not been spoken to by a teacher or career advisor about their futures. Half of the students did not take part in career guidance activities (Wylie & Hodgen, 2011).

Sahlberg (2011) has reported that an instrumental aspect of the well-performing Finnish education system is that career guidance and counselling have become a compulsory part of the comprehensive school curricula through The Basic Education Act of 1998. During their three years of lower secondary school, all students are entitled to two hours a week of educational guidance and counselling, thus reducing the risk that students make ill-informed decisions regarding their further studies. Additionally students have been found to make successful transitions through their schooling because they are well prepared to make decisions about post-compulsory education from systematic counselling on their options. Valijarvi and Sahlberg (2008) also identified educational guidance and counselling as an important factor in explaining low grade repetition and dropout rates in Finland. Conversely, in New Zealand, ERO (2012) found in their review on career information, guidance and education in secondary schools that of the 44 schools evaluated, only four had high quality provision. Conventional approaches were found in 17 schools and were driven by the schools' career department but did not extend across curriculum departments; 19 schools had limited opportunities for students to explore possible opportunities and four schools had low quality systems. Generally career education was not seen as part of the classroom teacher's role, and no formal expectations were in place for departments to provide the service. The report emphasised the need for a school-wide focus to support regular co-ordinated and ongoing opportunities to develop career management competencies. Schools that managed this successfully focused on students' individual futures as well as pathways or vocations. Teachers and deans involved actively supported goal setting and investigation of opportunities about transitioning from school (ERO, 2012).

Vaughan and O'Neil's study (2010) of career education networks and communities of practice, found that although school-based career advisors were to assist young people from school to work and further education, they faced challenges in keeping their knowledge and expertise current because of "major changes in the nature of work and in contemporary transitions from school" (p. 1) that saw them playing continual catch up. However, if school services were struggling with change so, too, were schooling structures and teachers coming under pressure. Since schooling purposes are so strongly linked to economic and social progress, education systems like that of Aotearoa/New Zealand became increasingly obliged

to meet global expectations. The changing nature of the relationship between secondary schooling, work and the social contract of education – where the work of education is to provide life choices for those in the system (Dale & Robertson, 2009) – has left teachers and administrators increasingly accountable for raising the performance of every child. Students’ support for planning ahead was very much dependent on how these pressures and expectations shaped their opportunities.

Positioning of the Secondary School Student

The education systems of New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, Canada and the USA share a common trait which sees a disengaging group consisting of as many as 20% of each cohort leaving the education system. The rise of ‘NEET’ (Not in Employment, Education or Training) is accorded statistical significance in New Zealand with 17,000–25,000 young New Zealanders (15-19 years) in this category in 2011 (Middleton, 2011). These statistical patterns raise important questions about how well schools are supporting pathways that lead to work and learning. That young people with working class, and particularly Māori and Pasifika working class, backgrounds are traditionally under-represented in tertiary education is an ongoing issue, reflecting the intensification of national and international concerns around the educational and vocational participation and achievement of ethnic minority groups. For example the North American literature in this area has claimed that historically African-American, Latino, and Native American students have been underserved in US schools (Corson, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit & 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1997). In Australia, Hayes (2012) has argued that schools can either reinforce alienation and disengagement, or they can work to develop educational environments that are more conducive to the interests and experiences of disenfranchised students. Teese (2006) has contended however, that change won’t come from top schools because maintenance of the status quo is in their interests and they are conservative.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand the gap between richest and poorest students increased more than in any other OECD country (with the exception of Sweden) through the period 1985 to 2012 (OECD, 2013). Enabling people to avoid and escape poverty has been viewed as critical to closing this gap which has been created by the complex social, economic and political realities of rising income inequality (Carpenter & Osborne, 2014). Recent OECD reports *Equity and Quality in Education* (OECD, 2012) and *Divided We Stand* (OECD, 2011) signal a need for ensuring social and economic prosperity through schooling success. While structural sources of inequalities in employment, health and housing require urgent policies

to combat poverty issues outside the school domain (Berliner, 2006; McNaughton, 2011) it is education and in particular access to tertiary education that has been identified as a critical focus. Children growing up in poverty, often in low decile schools, who come from families with low incomes are disadvantaged (Snook & O'Neill, 2014; Thrupp, 2007; Wylie, 2013). Consequently, in the current Ministry of Education discourse, they are considered to be priority learners. According to Sahlberg (2010) education systems are facing a two-fold challenge, how to change schools so that students can learn new types of skills and knowledge in “an unpredictably changing knowledge world” (p. 1), and how to make that new learning possible for all students regardless of their socioeconomic status. In New Zealand, effective policies and research practices for Māori and Pasifika students and students from poorer communities have been called for in the knowledge that educational disparities between these students and others is preventable. ERO (2010b) found many secondary schools needed to be more rigorous in their analysis and review of Māori student achievement in order to assist with decisions about promoting their future success.

Cultural Capital and Institutional Habitus

In the literature there is a range of explanations for the relative powerlessness of schools and school systems to equalise the outcomes for children of different groups either at the beginning or over the course of life at school. Sociologists argue that a significant factor in the future success of students is cultural capital which links economic advantage and educational culture to the socioeconomic group to which students belong (Bourdieu, 1977). This theory starts from the premise that different families have different access to social and cultural resources that are valued by schools. Because schools are instrumental in the stratification of society, and either intentionally or unconsciously the dominant group wishes and acts to maintain its position, schools provide different developmental bases that are more or less transferable (Cummins, 1986; Delpit & Perry 1998).

If school practices and processes identify, respond to and act on the cultural capital students bring with them to school in the form of knowledge and skills, a critical issue is whether the knowledge and skills of all children, as developed through the socialisation processes provided by communities and families, are equally valued and validated by schools (Bourdieu, 1996). This has particular implications when linked to the stereotypical expectations that have become embedded in a system that characterises schools by decile rankings. For students in a high decile school progress at school through the qualifications system may be an accepted norm whereas such expectations may be more difficult to secure

in a low decile school. While deficit theorising continues to dominate some research in relation to the achievement gap in Aotearoa/New Zealand, an increasingly compelling argument is that schooling can reduce inequalities by legitimating the cultural capital students bring to it. The need to mobilise the social, linguistic and cultural processes of diverse communities as resources for learning and teaching has been identified by Moll (2010) as a developing focus. If such knowledges and skills are valued and promoted by the school McNaughton (2011) contends, “this capital can be cashed in at school” (p. 10), enhancing possibilities for children to move out of poverty.

Smyth and Banks (2012) have referred to the concept of ‘institutional habitus’ which has increasingly been used to identify how schools can produce and build on various forms of capital that can shape the educational pathways of their students. A study by Gillies, Wilson, Soden, Gray and McQueen (2010) on learner engagement in an English school that identified a clash between students’ home culture and that of the school focused on supporting the students in gaining the cultural resources that would enable success in an education and economic system that differed substantially from that of their community. The kind of guidance provided to students (McDonough, 1997), teacher expectations, the social mix of the student body, and historical factors contribute to the institutional habitus of the school (Smyth & Banks, 2012). Hayes (2012) has claimed that enterprising community collaborations can mediate the negative situation students find in schools. She refers to an example of a socially just system in Sydney that assists young people to construct life narratives in which they are able to chart their way through and around problems, and accumulate the skills, knowledge and dispositions they need to access the formal economy.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Bishop & Berryman (2006) claim that cultural responsiveness is a way of thinking and being that puts considerable onus on teachers to confront their personal beliefs and their relationships with students and with communities. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, researchers have argued that culturally responsive teaching that affirms and validates the culture of each learner should be at the centre of successful culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy (2007) have suggested that the creation of learning contexts needs to allow for both visible and invisible elements of culture. Cultural competence also involves utilising the learners’ culture to aid teaching and learning processes, increasing the success of students (Bishop et al., 2007).

There are few examples in the literature where the cultural responsiveness component of teaching has been systemically incorporated into whole school reform processes. Te Kotahitanga, a New Zealand programme of secondary school change that focused entirely on this component, involves changing the responsiveness of teachers to Māori students (Bishop et al., 2010). Interactions and instructional resources on a daily basis involve an awareness and practice of beliefs, values, expectations and culturally significant patterns. The Effective teaching profile (ETP) underpins the professional learning support offered through Te Kotahitanga. This represents an ‘operationalisation’ of Māori aspirations (New Zealand Teachers’ Council, 2007, p. 3) for education and provides a model of what culturally responsive pedagogy of relations might look like in practice. The framework emphasises the varied positioning and relationships that enhance the agency of the learners (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2009):

- Manaakitanga (caring for students as culturally located human beings above all else)
- Mana motuhake (caring for the performance of students)
- Whakapiringatanga (creating a well-managed learning environment)
- Wananga (engaging in effective teaching interactions)
- Ako (using a range of strategies to promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with learners)
- Kotahitanga (Kotahitanga (promoting, monitoring, and reflecting on outcomes)

(Te Kete Ipurangi, 2014, n.p.)

Similarly to cultural capital theory, Te Kotahitanga argues that traditional school pedagogy often takes forms that are mismatched with students’ culturally based values, skills, experiences and knowledge. Guidance on how to better respond emotionally and cognitively to students highlights the importance of incorporating students’ social, cognitive and cultural backgrounds into the classroom (Bishop et al., 2010; McNaughton, 2002). Early reports on the programme provided evidence from 12 schools to suggest that engagement and retention gains could be substantial. While the implementation of the programme continued to offer promising outcomes, government funding has been discontinued, suggesting that the possibility of transformational change rests now with secondary schools that wish to continue to facilitate and support Te Kotahitanga.

Though the policy focus of many countries in the western world has sharpened around culturally based issues, it seems that secondary schools cannot enhance the educational planning strategies of their students merely through the addition of an isolated strategy. Schools are under greater pressure to introduce courses geared to students' needs, particularly for those students that the education system is perceived to be failing. The MOE policy and strategy documents are fundamental to the way Aotearoa/New Zealand schools operate and embedded in these is the imperative to honour our historical links with Māori. While most National Educational Guidelines (NEGS) can be linked to Māori and Pasifika students generally, NEG 9 has an expectation that schools will respond to: "Increased participation and success by Māori through advancement of Māori education initiatives, including education in Te Reo Māori, consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi" (MOE, 2007).

Perceptions of Today's Learners

The importance of focusing attention on learning pathways to careers and tertiary study for secondary school students is signalled to schools in the NZC - "making it possible for students to participate in programmes or studies offered by workplaces and tertiary institutions" (MOE, 2007, p. 42). The NZC identifies five key competencies (p. 12).

- Thinking
- Using language, symbols, and texts
- Managing self
- Relating to others
- Participating and contributing

These competencies have relevance for students in planning for and negotiating their educational pathways, particularly "managing self" which involves self-motivation, establishment of personal goals, making plans, managing projects, and setting high standards; having strategies for meeting challenges; knowing when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently (MOE, 2007, p. 12). According to Timperley (2008) this curriculum has shifted perceptions about the knowledge and skills required by today's learners. Other national initiatives have been developed specifically to enhance Māori student pathways (e.g., ERO, 2008, 2010a). The Government's Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019 notes an increase in Māori and Pasifika school leavers moving to degree study between 2007 and 2012 (MOE, 2014). The need for communities "to be provided with more information about the post-school outcomes and destinations of their students"

and for schools to “focus on providing quality careers information, advice and guidance that take account of the aspirations of Māori students, their parents, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities” has been highlighted by the MOE (2013a, p. 39). This is a recent iteration of ongoing strategic goals for enhancing Māori educational success and Māori student pathways to careers and university (MOE, 2008; 2013a). It proposes principles of Māori potential, and targets Māori enjoying educational success as Māori. Working together and sharing power is embedded in this approach which emphasises achieving at the highest levels. The strategy name *Ka Hikitia*, means to lift up or step up performance. Increases in Bachelor’s degree (or higher) enrolments and in course completion rates were recorded to 2012, although the considerable “participation and achievement gap at higher levels (especially for younger students) between Māori and the rest of the population” has persisted (MOE, 2013a, p. 44). The aim is that by 2017, “Māori school leavers achieving University Entrance will be on a par with non-Māori school leavers” (p. 58).

The Pasifika Education Plan (2013b) has been another sustained MOE initiative that has a similar vision for Pasifika peoples – to enable them to gain the knowledge and skills to ensure success at all levels of their educational and post-educational careers (MOE, 2013b). A goal is that “Pasifika learners participate and achieve at all levels at least on a par with other learners in tertiary education” (p. 11). However, research evidence from the Starpath project (2005-2013) has indicated that there are a variety of barriers that place limitations on pathways to university that particularly affect Māori and Pasifika students. Poor subject choices (Madjar et al., 2009) and challenging transitions from low decile schools to university (Madjar & McKinley, 2010) have been identified as specific features of these obstacles. This chapter acknowledges the importance of supporting Māori and Pasifika students in negotiating such barriers and argues that it is now time to look at a students’ PEP trajectory holistically, both at school and beyond.

Government initiatives to address expanding apprenticeship training opportunities through Māori and Pasifika trades training, has projected a fivefold increase to provide 3,000 places by 2015. Increasing places in the Youth Guarantee programme (up to 10,500 places by 2015) is a further initiative designed to overcome hurdles for successful transition from secondary school (MOE, 2013a, p. 45). Yet challenges exist, many of which, according to the research evidence, mean further work is needed to ensure the education system is delivering the levels of success predicted.

Improvements did not occur when a focus on equality of access rather than equality of opportunity was implemented. The relationship between vocational education, social origins and destinations remained at the heart of the debate on inequality (Besley, 2000). It was suggested that all students need to be supported in their PEP by school-based practices that are purposeful and that help plan and monitor progress so that opportunities to pursue preferred pathways are enhanced (Robertson & Norrie, 2011; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). However, according to Waitere (2010), the litmus test is Māori performance. In 2012 the government set the target of 85% of 18 year-olds attaining NCEA level 2 or an equivalent qualification by 2017. Middleton (2011) has questioned the logic of a funding formula for schools where 89% is fixed with a one-size-fits-all approach that offers no possibility of flexibility or delivery options. Secondary students are again in the limelight. Academic and career options at school and beyond need to be made for twenty-first century choices, which in turn affect life choices. The nature of such choices relate to further studies, further training, career, employment and what has become the catch phrase lifelong learning.

Lifelong Learning

Rather than lifelong education as in the 1970s (e.g., Faure et al., 1972) the new emphasis became lifelong learning (Delors, 1996). The 1970s notion of the learning society, which recognised the need to address changes within a state through constant learning within society, had envisaged the school as less influential a force than it had once been (Schön, 1973). Rather than gaining new information about the wider world from teachers, students had access to a wide range of knowledge drawn from magazines, television, foreign travel and film (Husén, 1974). As lifelong learning moved from these liberal roots of enabling access to 'recurrent education' (in which education would alternate with work and other activities across the lifespan) (Boshier, 2001; Robertson, 2005) the policy focus of many countries sharpened to support the so-called knowledge economy, in which knowledge became the most important source for future advantage (Field, 2006). Achievement of widespread learning for citizens throughout their lifespan became a fundamental concern (Benseman, 2003) through its learner-centred rather than teacher-centred approach.

Robertson (2005) has argued that lifelong learning set up a parallel discourse to that of traditional education systems, in that it is was not confined to a particular professional group, specific phase of life, or to a public sector provider. As traditional structures and associated institutions of industrial society no longer provided signposts for planning one's

life, new forms of individual planning opened up. As explained by Beck (1992): “Schooling means choosing and planning one’s own educational life course. The educated person becomes the producer of his or her own labour situation, and in this way of his or her own social biography” (p. 93). For Kuhn and Sultana (2006), the new model of lifelong learning conceived of the individual as responsible for his/her own welfare and future within the knowledge-based economy and society. Wilterdink (1993) has argued further that lifelong learning defends against global competitors and is a means to becoming a global citizen with all the acquired linguistic, interpersonal and cultural skills. How learning may stretch out across a lifetime and include elements of maximum flexibility and responsiveness to continuous self-improvement are matters of interpretation. Given that over the next 8-10 years about 1.2 billion 15-30 year-olds will be entering the job market and an estimated 300 million will get a job (Ahtisaari, as cited in Sahlberg, 2011, p. 1), the future planning of around a billion students presents significant challenges. While the literature highlights global agendas, there is little attention given to how students might be scaffolded at secondary school to think forward, plan their engagement with their education or even talk about it.

The NZC sets out its vision for young people as those “who will be confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners” (MOE, 2007, p. 8), but the language has changed with the latest iteration of the Tertiary Education Strategy to focus on the constantly changing ways people approach learning to accommodate changes in “technology and the needs of society and the economy”. The challenge, it is suggested, “is to cater for these changing needs while providing clear guidance to learners on how they can reach their goals by the most direct route possible” (MOE, 2014, p. 3).

Student Voice, Roles and Rights to Participate

Student voice originates in the youth development field and is strongly linked to the rights-based framework for child/youth participation derived from the United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which stresses “young people’s intrinsic rights as autonomous individuals deserving of equality, choice, respect, and consideration” (Bragg, 2007, p. 12). Under Article 12 of the UNCRC, children have the right to offer their opinions and have their views taken into account on any matter concerning their wellbeing. However through the early part of the twenty-first century, while the overall picture in education suggested a focus on what was best for the student in terms of what they need to know, understand and be able to do, “at no time do we hear the voice of the student, or any

suggestion that students should be consulted in the planning process” (MacDonald, 2000, p. 91). Little attention in the literature has been given to the kind of paradigm shift Carnell (2000) proposed in which she encouraged a learning dialogue among teachers and students. She contended that as young people acquire a view of themselves as active participants in their own learning, they then become more committed and effective as learners. Lundy (2007) has suggested that adult resistance to this approach might stem from skepticism about children’s capacity to have input into decision-making, including concerns about children’s control undermining authority and effort that could be channelled into education itself. Sahlberg (2011) has noted that the voices of students are rarely heard in the educational policy and reform business. More recently Fielding (2012) has claimed that listening to what students have to say about teaching and learning is part of a growing movement in the UK.

Up until this point student voice had been heard only from token representatives on school councils dealing with mostly pastoral issues, but Fielding has suggested the new model of personalised education sees students as more savvy consumers. They make decisions about what and how they would like to learn and how well they are assessed, as well as being co-designers of services. Fielding (2006) has contended that the student voice movement has evolved because of the changing view of childhood, the need to comply with UNCRC, as well as citizenship and democracy issues. Furthermore school inspectors in England now seek student opinion. According to Fielding (2006), student voice can represent their involvement in research in a number of ways, including as researcher, active respondent, or source of information. Teachers have reported being positively surprised by student engagement as well as getting insights that help their own professional development. According to Fielding (2006), schools benefit from a more partner oriented relationship as well as from the identity they develop as learning organisations. Teachers must care, though, as students know if the teacher’s attention to student voice is just tokenism.

A growing body of research in North America has linked student voice to school engagement and motivation. According to Toshalis and Nakkula (2012), “empowering youth to express their opinions and influence their educational experiences so that they feel they have a stake in the outcomes [is] one of the most powerful tools schools have to increase learning” (p. 3). These same perspectives informed Ari Sussman (2012) who coordinated the Student Voice Collaborative (SVC) in New York City. The group of just twelve students in groups of two conducted studies of their high schools, identified relevant

challenges, and carried out student-led school improvement programmes in partnership with staff and students. It is worth noting that SVC researchers have found it challenging to influence more public schools, citing traditional attitudes about the roles of students and teachers as well as efficiencies around quantifiable results and accountability as barriers. Similarly, in New Zealand Hipkins (2010) found from a 2009 National Survey of Secondary Schools that teachers had divergent opinions about student voice. When presented with the survey statement “there is too much emphasis on ‘student voice’ and similar ideas nowadays”, 26 percent agreed or strongly agreed; 34 percent were unsure and 39 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (Hipkins, 2010, p. 89). Bolstad (2011) has questioned whether the term ‘student voice’ means “listening to students’ opinions”, providing opportunity for them to make decisions about their learning, or enabling joint decision-making in matters of school management and governance (p. 31). Some of the literature identifies the process as problematic because of the possibility for student-adult relations of power to impact (e.g., Fielding, 2006; Lundy, 2007; Mitra, 2009). Similarly Bolstad (2011, p. 32) has argued that ‘listening to students’ does not guarantee an equal relationship or that student input will be ongoing or taken into account. In her view a better way to think about student voice is the term “youth-adult partnership”.

The Voices of Young Māori

The importance of student voice for Māori was highlighted in the research of Ormond (2004) who analysed the voices and silences of young Māori as part of a larger nationwide project *Youth First-Taking Kids’ Talk Seriously*. The research drew upon young people’s experiences within a Māori community in rural New Zealand and explored how cultural, social and economic changes had impacted on their lives. The voices of young Māori not only offered valuable research insights into their worlds but findings also showed how capable they were in analysing society and articulating their views. In the Te Kotahitanga project mentioned earlier, interviews with Māori students began the research, where the aim of the conversations was to gain a better understanding of Māori student experiences in the classroom and of others involved in their education. These “narratives of experience” (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 4) were drawn from talking with about 70 Māori students in year 9 or year 10 about what it was like to be a young Māori person in mainstream secondary education. Half of these students were identified by their school as being engaged with what the school had to offer while the other half were identified as disengaged. The researchers found that the students were able to recognise positive and negative influences on their educational achievement, while also clearly identifying how their educational

achievement could be improved. Furthermore the voices of these students helped the researchers learn about characteristics of teachers that made a difference, drawing these together into the Effective Teaching Profile, which has been implemented in 33 secondary schools as a critical dimension of Te Kotahitanga. What has emerged from this research is evidence of the kind of self-insight and self-understanding that suggests students are very capable of ownership of their PEP. The question remains as to whether secondary schools are ready to embrace and support that ownership.

Chapter Summary

Individual educational planning, a process by which students reflect upon and plan their own learning, performance and achievement, and plan for their lifelong educational or career development, is still a relatively recent concept in the New Zealand educational research literature. Like any concept it has undergone a number of discursive shifts as competing aims of society have carried over into the purposes of schooling and the destinations of secondary school students. Social and economic policies underpinning this relationship have been informed by, and located within, particular ideological frameworks: liberal-progressivism, liberal humanism and neoliberalism, with each dominating at different times, and each to an extent expressing contradictory messages. Secondary schools have been left to grapple with these tensions without a clear organisational structure.

Restructuring education has implications for the kind of students who emerge from the school system and their destinations. The view that students are passive individuals waiting for their rightful place in adult life has served to deny young people agency over their pathways at school and beyond. Now that there are more diverse educational options with flexible pathways to qualifications and recognition of a greater range of skills than before, new conditions and challenges have been created for today's global students who expect more from their schooling. As national and international research findings have shown, a clear structure for supporting students has proven to be problematic. Hence a challenge for secondary schools would appear to be connecting up the many resources and support services already committed to students' PEP into a coherent system. Such a system would need to have outcomes monitored and overall accountability. Whether an organisational schema, or a network dedicated to development and support for students and staff within students' PEP, a key focus would seem to be designing effective directions and strategies for planning educational pathways and enhancing achievement for all students. This chapter has argued that students' perceptions of their requirements and expectations from their

schooling necessitate more attention, hence the significance of the current research which focuses on their voices. An examination of which students are more likely to access help with their educational planning also reveals that those students who may need such guidance are the least likely to receive it in their schools. As the research findings discussed in this chapter have demonstrated, though there is an expectation that students can access support and guidance relatively easily through an infrastructure of educational support services, in many New Zealand schools, little has changed. While a comprehensive student support programme is seen as crucial for supporting students in their PEP, the nature of what this might look like and the structures, activities and processes involved are only beginning to be understood. Moreover students have not been asked what they think of their current educational planning support, a matter which the current study seeks to address.

The Next Chapter

The next chapter moves from a sociocultural understanding of the complexities of PEP to an examination of components that might make up a system of PEP. Attention is given to how in combination these components might influence the enactment of PEP in current secondary schools. Considering different, albeit related, manifestations of student support in concert brings into sharp relief the expanding responsibility of secondary schools in managing the educational planning of young people.

CHAPTER THREE:

What Really is Behind PEP?

While all today's students hold beliefs and attitudes about their experiences at school, their capacity for personal agency around their educational planning within the school system is not always clear. This cannot always be observed directly, but can be inferred from patterns of activity and practices within the secondary school, through roles in which the student engages and capabilities they develop. The previous chapter has explored and noted limitations in the historical assumption that the teacher and the school define an individual student's educational trajectory. An acknowledged shift from the locus of control residing with the teacher to a partnership between student and teacher underpins this chapter. How today's students become genuine co-constructors of their learning pathways at school and beyond relies upon a combination of school practices, relationships and support systems. The potential of these systems to maximise students' motivation and ownership of their PEP journey is outlined in this chapter, and capabilities and orientations promoted in students to effectively support that journey are explored.

The call for accountability within education noted in Chapter 2 has led to increased examination of the academic achievement of students and the ways in which their educational pathways are navigated. Too often however "schools are scrutinised by means of overly simplistic linear models that fail to consider the complexity of understandings that result in student achievement" (Johnson, 2008, p. 1). Though it is an aspect of a student's experience at secondary school today, PEP can differ across and within support services, across subjects, and in complexity, from surface infrastructure support to comprehensive scaffolding. Significantly, student beliefs about their capabilities are caught up in these interactions and in turn their interpretation and response to these structures and systems shape and filter their educational journeys both at school and beyond. A starting point for examining the complexity of PEP is the ecological systems framework of Bronfenbrenner (1986). Bronfenbrenner's model (1986, 1989) is useful in understanding the nature of the complex interacting systems that influence an individual student's educational planning, and offers an organised picture of the intentions of PEP.

Bronfenbrenner's Systems Framework and PEP

The ecology of human development is the study of progressive, mutual accommodation between a growing human being and the changing elements of the immediate settings in which that person lives. The relations between these settings and the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded affect this process (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Therefore, to study a student's evolving educational planning development, it is helpful not only to address the student and his or her immediate environment, but also the impact of overlapping systems within the larger environment. Bronfenbrenner (2005) has claimed that as a child develops, the interactions within these environments or systems become more complex. As a maturing student's PEP journey becomes more complex, the importance of mediating effective interacting systems is highlighted.

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1989) initial theory, the environment is comprised of four layers of systems which interact in complex ways. The microsystem refers to the institutions and groups that most directly impact on the child including the family and school. The mesosystem consists of interconnections between the microsystems such as interactions between the family and teachers while the exosystem involves links between a social setting where the child does not have a role but may be influenced by changes for parents which then involve changing interactions with the child. The macrosystem describes the large cultural context in which the child lives. Drawing on this theory, the question can be asked whether the world that surrounds the student, in the classroom and beyond, helps or hinders the development of a student's educational planning process (Addison, 1992). As well as contextualising the individual challenges for the student as they navigate their PEP, a process-person-context research model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) can also take account of organisational development. Johnson (2008) advocates extending the model to understand how developmental processes such as teaching and learning, and outcomes such as student achievement, vary as a joint function of the characteristics not only of the school, but the systems and environment surrounding the school.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the macrosystem influences on PEP and describes the nature of political forces and patterns of social interchange that might affect an individual's negotiation of their PEP. Since the previous chapter has provided understandings of the historical and political contexts leading up to the current environment of PEP, this section pays particular attention to how schools are affected by the current global climate of accountability. The sociohistorical dimension of the macrosystem, where

the individual student lives through changing global and national pressures over time, is encapsulated in Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem (1995). Although the chronosystem is not one of the four system layers per se, it influences all levels of the ecological system and can refer to both short- and long-term time dimensions of the developing individual. The chronosystem of the individual school may represent both day to day and year to year developmental changes which may occur, such as staffing changes, demographic shifts in the student body or curricular choices offered by the school (Johnson, 2008). Furthermore Johnson suggests that a newer school faces challenges and opportunities that differ from those experienced by more established schools.

The next section of this chapter focuses on the exosystem influences on PEP by describing aspects of the community surrounding the school, such as the MOE and ERO, and examines evidence-based expectations and data-based thinking and tracking of students in their schooling. While the MOE and ERO have an indirect influence on the secondary school student, they set out and regulate expectations for schools and in turn students. The third section of the chapter focuses on the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) influences on PEP which concern interactions between home and school, including leadership, and explores the paradigm shift that has occurred in parent involvement in secondary schools, focusing particularly on family-school partnerships. The chapter then examines the microsystem, which focuses on the activities, relationships, actions and roles of the developing student. The innermost microsystem ecologies (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) of the individual student's intentions and capabilities which influence their PEP are then highlighted. These include motivation, self-regulatory learning and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, 2002). The microsystems discussed include academic counselling, student-teacher relationships, subject choosing and goal setting. Hence, this chapter is firstly divided into four major sections, the macro, exo, meso and microsystems as they relate to the individual student and the ecological context of the individual school. The final section of the chapter addresses the construct of engagement as it relates to PEP.

The Macrosystem of Global and Local Imperatives

The outermost layer in the student's environment, the macrosystem, is comprised of cultural values, belief systems, customs, and resources embedded therein (Berk, 2000). This system is considered to exert an influence not only on the person, but also on the micro, meso, and exosystems. This links a student's PEP to the political policy environment. The macrosystem of the individual school is also influenced by the political, social, cultural and

economic climate of the local community, the nation and the global educational environment. One such influence, the OECD's PISA has become a global benchmark for evaluating the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems (OECD, 2013).

Since the year 2000, over 70 countries and economies have participated in PISA assessments (28 million participants in 2012), through which the ability to apply skills and knowledge learned at school to "real-life situations" is tested (PISA, 2013). Focusing primarily (but not exclusively) on the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15-year old students approaching the end of their compulsory education, PISA's findings have relevance for understanding the effectiveness of a student's PEP. An aim is to identify the characteristics of high-performing education systems that have proven to be effective, with a view to having them adapted to local contexts. Conducted under the auspices of the OECD and managed within New Zealand by the MOE, over 5,000 students from 177 schools took part in the main PISA 2012 study which showed an increased gap since 2009 in outcomes between New Zealand's best performing and worst performing students (OECD, 2013).

As might be expected, socioeconomic influences in the macrosystem, such as the rise in income inequality, contribute to the complexity of issues that affect students. Attainment and completion at secondary school have become a policy focus for New Zealand, with a target of 85% of 18 year-olds leaving school with no less than NCEA level 2 by 2017 having been set (MOE, 2014). How education leaders and policy makers identify and establish both clear goals and a common language for programs that are designed to help students and their parents deal effectively with changes as they relate to students' education plans has been viewed as critical preparation for the future (Ockerman, Mason, & Chen-Hayes, 2013).

The Exosystem and Organisational Structures for PEP

Good management systems and organisational structures that provide the necessary support and access to information and evidence make schools more effective organisations (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Government policy review and governance issues through the MOE, the NZQA and ERO make up the exosystem that impacts on schools and defines school policies within the larger social system of the student. This system encompasses events, policies and decisions over which the developing student has no influence. Data-driven practices of schools, data use, data-based systems, tracking students and data-informed conversations all contribute to this interaction and together make

PEP more transparent. They also influence the quality of PEP and the potential for it to have positive impact.

Data Practices and Accountability

Evidence from local and international best practice studies makes links between the use of data and improved student achievement outcomes (Campbell & Levin, 2009; Timperley & Parr, 2010). According to Schildkamp and Lai (2013) “data can be defined as systematically collected information on students, schools, school leaders and teachers which can be obtained from qualitative (e.g., classroom observations) and quantitative (e.g., assessment results) methods” (p. 177). Through analysing student achievement data and reflecting on teaching and learning, such systems have the potential to provide more accurate and timely feedback to students, track and monitor student progress, inform student goal setting and report more accurately to parents. Ultimately these processes are at the core of effective PEP.

In the past, dissemination of data to teachers has seen them as passive end-users, with data being seen to be for someone else’s use, not a means of informing teaching and learning in their classrooms (Lachat & Smith, 2005). With the move from an industrial era to a knowledge era, education systems are increasingly using data to support policy and practice decisions (Dunn, Ariola, Lo, & Garrison, 2013; Gifford & Agah, 2009). For some writers, much of the rhetoric around data use has had its genesis in the public’s desire to hold schools more accountable, but has emerged as a policy response to New Public Management (Burbules & Torres, 2000). Others see the data/school improvement nexus as largely an internal problem determined by the interactions of those within it (Earl & Lewis, 2013). According to these researchers “the language of accountability is filtered through the existing policies, expectations, and decision making processes that remain distinctive in each nation state” (p. 195).

While international research indicates a less comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing schools, administrators and teachers if data are to be used effectively (Anderson, Leithwood, & Strauss, 2010; Ikemoto & Marsh, 2007; Wayman, Cho, Jimmerson, & Snodgrass Rangel, 2010), in New Zealand data is becoming a central component of policy dialogue. It is therefore essential “to ensure that data about education is accurate, defensible and used appropriately” (Earl & Lewis, 2013, p. 200). If programmes appropriate to teachers’ needs, like tracking students longitudinally and disaggregating data easily to monitor effectiveness, are to be scaled up, reliable, integrated, accessible, and centrally

supported data management systems need to be guaranteed (Wayman, Jimerson, & Cho, 2012).

The New Zealand secondary school data context

New Zealand secondary schools collect a wide range of data from attainment results to student demographics which can be stored in the student management system (SMS). Whether they have the resources and the capability to manage and use these systems is not known. There is little research on what kinds of data New Zealand schools collect, and what supports are in place to help teachers access and use it. Though teachers recognise the importance of school-wide data for decision-making (ERO, 2011) relevant data are not always accessible and system capacities and formats can be problematic (Irving & Gan, 2012). It appears that data systems have been managed by goodwill and school-based initiatives rather than a strong infrastructure guaranteed to be reliable, accurate and fit for purpose.

A growing emphasis on evidence based teaching and learning as part of the “teaching as inquiry” cycle (MOE, 2007, p. 35) has put more pressure on schools to find better ways to use their data for improving learning outcomes (Campbell & Levin, 2009; Earl & Katz, 2006). Quality assurance is through ERO where the central review question is “How effectively does this school’s curriculum promote student learning – engagement, progress and achievement?” (ERO, 2009). Data are then gathered by ERO to evaluate how well the school uses effective self-review to maximize improvement. Despite these imperatives for data use, Irving and Gan (2012) found inconsistencies in the data systems of 16 New Zealand secondary schools. Although schools had a range of SMS in place and were rich with data from which to build a comprehensive profile of student learning, they lacked a coherent approach to school-wide data collection, storage and use. Even for students from year 11 who were facing NCEA imperatives, data silos were common. The arbitrary nature of the oversight of student performance over time highlighted the importance of a systematic approach to tracking individual students throughout their PEP journey (Irving & Gan, 2012).

A review of assessment approaches in New Zealand commissioned by the Ministry of Education resulted in the report *Directions for Assessment in New Zealand* (Absolum, Flockton, Hattie, Hipkins & Reid, 2009). The report envisages an “assessment capable” system where students are empowered to become self-regulated learners “where all young people should be educated in ways that develop their capacity to assess their own learning”

(Absolum et al., 2009, p.5). In placing the voice of the learner at the heart of the learning the advice in DANZ is consistent with research that highlights the importance of student involvement in the assessment process (Earl, 2003; Hattie & Timperley 2007; Sadler, 2010). The use of the term *assessment capable* discerns the New Zealand perspective from other assessment systems where the student's own assessment capability may not be at the centre of the assessment process (Booth, Hill & Dixon, 2014). Enabling student agency in their learning is also reflected in the norms of behaviour required for the self-management of PEP where evaluative and productive skills are required for self-monitoring (Sadler, 1989).

In 2010, a national report found that teachers benefit from discussions about “patterns and trends identified from the collation and analysis of school wide achievement information” (ERO, 2010b, p. 9). Examination of school-wide data would enable teachers to reflect on implications for their practice. Building leader and teacher capacity to know their students as learners through the data was seen to be necessary, but there was no explicit reference to students managing their own data. Similar to a role in place in some European and US contexts, Irving and Gan (2012) argued for a student achievement manager with analytic problem-solving skills who could use the data to evaluate and systematically check that valued outcomes were met, and to ensure programme initiatives did what they were designed to do. However, New Zealand has been slow in producing a coherent system, despite the many programmes being trialled and scaled up in New Zealand schools (e.g., Starpath, 2005-13). Currently central government promotes a model in which a broad range of data is to be used for reflecting on teaching, management and leadership practices as part of a cycle of inquiry (Timperley & Parr, 2010). Seeking student voice through such means as questionnaires is included in this range, but how students know themselves as learners through the data is less clear.

Research suggests that teachers using data to inform their teaching has helped raise student achievement. A literacy intervention with 48 schools to raise Māori and Pasifika students' reading comprehension was carried out with approximately 240 teachers and 5,000 students in urban primary schools. Various classroom and school-wide data were used to monitor student progress, and identify target needs (Lai, McNaughton, Amituanai-Toloa, Turner, & Hsiao, 2009). Collaborative teacher effort in learning about students through the data contributed to student achievement, while data sitting in silos and being used for external quality assurance purposes was a wasted resource. Teachers' knowledge and skills interpreting and using data, and their own instructional decisions, were seen to be more

productive than narrowly focused evidence-based decisions (Hattie, 2005; Irving & Gan, 2012). Similarly, if teachers are to guide effective PEP decision making, they need to be data literate and able to communicate that knowledge to their students.

Data-based Thinking and Decision-making

Though meaningful data analysis, interpretation and application supports wise decision-making by teachers (Earl & Lewis, 2013), it is less clear who is expected to identify strengths and weaknesses about individual students and make resultant and ongoing decisions. International literature suggests that the responsibility for such decisions should be embedded within the school structure rather than addressed in a supplementary and ad-hoc way. Partnerships between educational leaders and teachers that enable systematic examination of classroom practice and use of data in decision-making have been noted (Dunn et al., 2013; Katz & Hands, 2007). The need for a robust infrastructure that allows for and supports teachers in analysing and interpreting disaggregated data at multiple levels has also been noted (Lai & McNaughton, 2008). To identify and monitor student need in a sustainable way, a cohesive approach to thinking about the students and their personal data sets is crucial. This would include using it as a tool through which various issues of PEP could be better understood, such as in parent/teacher/student interactions, subject choosing, and planning ahead for future careers or tertiary study. As Earl and Katz (2006) argue, data need to be used in targeted and productive ways.

Tracking students through the data

Globally the process of tracking students along academic, general or vocational tracks has been a growing focus of education systems. In the US there has been a strong programmatic approach to tracking students through their PEP (Mau, 1995; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007; Whiston et al., 2011). There is consensus in the UK and US literature that by failing to track individual student progress over their entire school careers, important patterns in educational underachievement are either being overlooked or tackled ineffectively. Mehan and Hubbard (1999) found that, when given a long enough timescale and adequate resourcing, tracking contributed significantly to reducing the achievement gap between low-income minority student groups and their higher socioeconomic peers. Improved results were attributed to incremental checking of individual records of achievement and one-to-one counselling. New Zealand has been slower in its call to track students (ERO, 2009), but questions have been raised about who might be assigned to counsel, monitor, work in partnership with and support tracking secondary students in the PEP process. Robertson &

Norrie (2011) suggest that it is teachers, deans and school advisors who understand their roles and responsibilities within educational planning actions and consult with parents accordingly. A task for this study is to gain understanding about how existing structures evolve and roles in schools are played out as school personnel become more skilled and equipped to assist students in understanding, managing and using data in constructive ways for their PEP.

Data informed student conversations

A learning partnership between teacher and student includes engaging with data, but little has been written about learner practice, engagement and perceptions of the collaboration. Enhancing teachers' confidence, professional judgements and experience in data-based decision-making helps "teachers, school leaders, and **even** students to make decisions that improve schooling" (Schildkamp & Lai, 2013, p. 177, emphasis added). Making sense of the data appears to be a process done 'to' and 'about' students with little acknowledgement of students' agency in the process. Creating opportunities for collaborative inquiry occurs, however, when data becomes a catalyst for constructive dialogue so that staff, parents and students can become better informed and more supportive, and where there are shared understandings and ownership of the issues being pursued (Kelly & Downey, 2011). Since data can represent much more than achievement, for example, "beliefs, behaviours, practices, opinions, perceptions" (Earl & Lewis, 2013, p. 201), engaging in question-driven inquiry would seem particularly empowering and motivating for the learner, particularly when generation of one's own problems and questions guides the inquiry. As has been noted, "questions that arise from one's own need to have to understand have a special value in the process of inquiry" (Paavola, Lipponen, & Hakkarinen, 2004, p. 202). Constructive conversations generated on key student performance questions also contribute to data-based dialogue (Campbell & Levin, 2009). An intervention in a New Zealand secondary school that utilised student learning profiles drawn from school data created a platform for constructive data-based discussion in three-way conversations with the student and family/whānau (McKinley et al., 2009). These discussions centred on the student's study and career goals, what their achievement data indicated about progress towards these goals, and strategies to support learning. Of importance was the potential of parent, teacher and student collaboration to enhance the way PEP was carried out in the school. How active this collaboration is depends on how much the mesosystem of the student is utilised.

The Mesosystem of Student, School and Home Interaction

Schools mediate preparation of students for successful postsecondary choices and a socially well-adjusted adult life. Understanding PEP requires consideration of the school's role in a student's life. The importance of active partnerships and common understandings between school and home exists within the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's (1992) theory. Interacting components of PEP located in the mesosystem comprise linkages between microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Bi-directional influences between these systems within the mesosystem in an individual school can be seen in the interactions and dynamics between teachers, students and parents (Johnson, 2008). Where a child's parents and teachers may affect his or her beliefs and behaviour around PEP, the child also affects the behaviour and beliefs of the parent towards this process. Strong leadership in the school is a factor in making these interactions positive and effective (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). This incorporates parent/school and parent/teacher interactions and meaningful partnerships between the student's teacher and parents. Bronfenbrenner's belief that a primary relationship at home needs to be with someone who can provide a sense of caring (Berk, 2000) translates to the quality of teacher-student relationships established at school where effective PEP is a process of trust and partnership. Purposeful school-based systems and practices that enhance PEP opportunities for students include working with both teachers and parents to choose subjects, set goals and foster motivation to learn. These layers in the mesosystem provide connections to the student's microsystem and give the student tools to explore other dimensions of their PEP.

Leadership Harnessing PEP

Fostering good relationships in the mesosystem requires examining how leadership is integrated in a way that is responsive to particular conditions facing the school (Gordon, 2010). A good model of PEP needs to harness family and community energy through an atmosphere of collaborative teamwork. School leaders influence students indirectly. In New Zealand, the best evidence synthesis on leadership recognised the central role of the leader in developing community relations and family practices which impact markedly on student achievement (Robinson et al., 2009). Leaders need to become expert at developing socially networked capacities that permit collective identification of problems and solutions (Gordon & Lewis, 2009; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). How leaders involve others in organisational decisions through shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003), teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and supportive collective purpose (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), all

contribute to creating productive cultures, professional unity and cohesion required for effective and successful networks for student educational planning.

Meaningful Engagement of Parents

Some research has shown that parents' characteristics such as education and income predict involvement at school, with those levels being higher for more educated and higher income families (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997; Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). A meta-analysis by Sirin (2005) of 74 studies (100,000 students) analysed the importance of SES and found stressors, such as parents having to work two jobs, limited the time available to support their children. Here the exosystem, which encompasses parent workplace issues or community-based family resources, has a direct influence on the mesosystem of students' educational journeys. Factors related to health, historical constraints or other stress-related family issues have also been identified in the literature as constraining parental ability to provide opportunities for their children (Gniewosz & Eccles, 2013). Observational studies show that many families remain in poverty even when parents are employed full-time (Duncan, Morris, & Rodrigues, 2011; Gennetian, Castells, & Morris, 2010). Parents working in poorly paid jobs requiring long hours away from home have little opportunity to actively engage with their child's school. Education systems need to mediate such stressors by providing a strong system of ongoing support within schools where students can feel secure in the knowledge they are navigating their educational pathways effectively, even if engagement from home is difficult to achieve at times.

Parents' own confidence to work with the school can also be an issue. Negative experiences as a student or limited prior education may be factors in the parents' orientation to their children's schools (see for example Ceballo, Huerta, & Epstein, 2010; Reschley & Christenson, 2009). Hattie (2009) identified differences in the language between home and school, proposing that high SES parents speak the language of the school, curriculum and learning more readily than low SES parents. This finding draws attention to the need for all schools to make their school contexts accessible and parent-friendly so that parents can become conversant and knowledgeable about their child's PEP.

Research has indicated that schools need to make a greater effort with underachieving groups which include minority ethnic groups and low SES students. Increased parental involvement has been identified as a key means for closing achievement gaps between more or less advantaged youth (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Hara, 1998). There are barriers for some families, though. Minimal proficiency in the dominant language can

preclude effective communication with schools, especially where there are few staff with the same ethnic/language background. Little familiarity with the school system and long work hours can all create difficulties (Ceballo et al., 2010). Reschley and Christenson (2009) also emphasise the importance of genuine partnerships between schools and families, mindful of the difference between parent attendance and parent participation, or low and high levels of engagement.

For Māori learners partnership includes collaboration and consultation with parents, whānau and iwi to learn and better understand what the Māori community values and wants for their children (McNaughton, 2011). In a study of just over 200 New Zealand primary school students McNaughton and Lai (2009) found a deliberate approach for family involvement in one primary school. The principal and leadership team strategically planned to include parents as a functioning part of the schools' curriculum, including their assistance as reading and language tutors. Respecting the dignity and cultural values of parents was essential. The school drew on the cultural expertise of parents and teachers to share achievement data and disseminate in the parents' languages, strategies that could be used to support the development of their children's numeracy and literacy, resulting in significant gains in reading comprehension. Parents were seen as the key to all these initiatives with valued roles within the school (McNaughton, 2011, p. 163). This is compelling evidence to illustrate the potential parents have in their adolescents' schools to support and enhance the PEP process.

A growing literature supports the importance of parent involvement in children's learning for children's achievement across primary and secondary school populations (Alton-Lee, 2003; Grolnick, Raftery-Helmer, & Flamm, 2013; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Parents help students recognise their own progress and learning and have a positive impact on student achievement, so facilitating parent involvement has been a national and international policy goal (e.g., Biddulph et al., 2003; Jeynes, 2005, 2007; U. S. Department of Education, 2010). Jeynes' two studies, both meta-analyses, showed large effects of parental involvement on primary students' grades and standardised test scores, and parental expectations on academic achievement at the secondary level respectively. For Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems and Holbein (2005) parental involvement impacted most on students' perceived control and confidence and their valuing of their own personal education effort, while Fan and Williams (2010) concluded that it was a combination of

parental involvement and educational aspirations for their children that was positively connected to children's engagement, intrinsic motivation and approach to academic tasks.

Family School Partnerships and Academic Success

Reciprocal interactions between school and home are also a basis for family-school partnerships (Martin, 2013). Evidence indicates that teachers and school-wide efforts can make a difference in parents' levels of involvement with their children's schools. This would include recognition that teachers' deficit assumptions and negative expectations of the student or the family can be a barrier to positive impacts (Epstein, 2001). Parent involvement in their children's school often highlights how their expertise is utilised to assist with cultural activities, arts, and school sports, but some literature explicitly differentiates this form of family-school partnerships from that which is focused on academic dimensions (e.g., Amituanai-Toloa, McNaughton, Lai, & Airini, 2009). These writers argue that parents need to be viewed as central to their child's achievement gains rather than useful adjuncts to their educational experience.

School support for family-school partnerships has been identified in the literature as having a positive effect on academic interactions and development, student achievement, and the development of a strong model of PEP for secondary school students. Such support includes, working with homes across diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic and SES backgrounds to develop consistency in expectations and activities (Reschley & Christenson, 2009); setting and monitoring goals for implementing family-school partnerships (Sanders & Epstein, 2000; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004); and privileging family-school partnerships over governance issues (Alton-Lee, 2003). Pommerantz and Moorman (2010) identified two mechanisms that produce positive effects on achievement in family-school partnerships. The first is a skill-development resource in which parents are given subject knowledge and accurate information about achievement to support their children. The second is a motivational resource initiated by a joint school and parent valuing of the school to be internalized by the child as a model of active engagement and agency with the school (Pommerantz & Moorman, 2010). These findings challenge previously accepted understandings about parent involvement in their child's learning and teaching, particularly in secondary schools, to focus on the meaningful role they can play. This important paradigm shift indicates that if a child's PEP is to operate effectively the role of parents needs to be a richly integrated factor of schooling.

Personalised Parent/Teacher Interviews

Traditionally parent–teacher interviews have been one mechanism for involving parents in their children’s schooling in order to gain understanding of what their child needs to do to succeed in school and how parents can best support this (Grubb et al., 2002). In New Zealand, each subject teacher is seen for between 5-10 minutes, a process often found to be unsatisfactory due to keeping to time and having no more than a superficial discussion. Some research findings have reported on parents finding these meetings unsatisfactory in terms of conflicting agendas and miscommunication (Power & Clarke, 2000). Successful PEP requires a much more transparent understanding of what the meeting is about and where it is going. Alternative approaches to parent-teacher conferences have emerged in the international literature. These generally involve the child, such as students being assigned an advisor with whom to meet and check performance regularly (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003).

This shift has been reflected more recently in the New Zealand literature. In a project which investigated barriers to participation in tertiary education experienced by traditionally under-represented groups, Starpath researchers worked with a cohort of secondary students in a mid-decile New Zealand school. The intervention, which included academic counselling, target setting and restructured parent-teacher interviews, was evaluated by drawing on the experiences of year 11 students, their parents, their mathematics, English and form teachers and school deans (McKinley et al., 2009). The new format for parent interviews involved parents/caregivers and their child meeting only with the child’s form teacher for an in-depth overview of their progress. This resulted in increased attendance at the interviews (approximately 76% parent/caregiver turnout compared to previous years of 9-13%). The restructured parent interview received resounding support from all staff, even though preparation for it increased teacher workloads. A key finding was that teachers came to know the students and their parents better where a personalised and in-depth assessment of their child’s academic performance formed the basis of the improved relationship (McKinley et al., 2009). The conclusions drawn suggest that teachers, advisors and learners need to develop strong understandings of the nature of PEP so that the learners’ pathways at school and beyond are enhanced by a mutual vision.

A New Zealand TEC-funded project to implement a model of academic counselling in eight Auckland and Northland secondary schools with significant Māori and/or Pasifika student populations, found that engaging meaningfully with parents about student pathways was an important factor in the students’ level of engagement with their PEP. The evaluation report

identified schools that committed time and resources to plan for 20-30 minute discussions with parents over 1-2 days (Robertson & Norrie, 2011). Moving parent–teacher meetings from an interview to a collaborative discussion with student, teacher and parent initiated opportunity for all participants to gain insights into how PEP systems could be positively embedded. The meetings were identified as successful because “students, teachers and parents were able to focus on student learning, achievement, career and academic goals” (Robertson & Norrie, 2011, p. 7). Up to 83% of parents attended the conferences in contrast to low turn outs in previous years, and parent involvement in children’s learning was recognized to be a major resource for PEP at school and beyond. A key finding of these studies has been that if parents are to have optimal and positive influence on how students plan and progress their education, schools need to actively facilitate and value the partnership of parents (Grolnick, et al., 2013; McNaughton & Lai, 2009).

Essentially the foundation of parental resources lies in the mesosystem. This is the layer where parental interactions have traditionally consisted of help for various sporting and fundraising events, festivals and drama productions. Other contributions have involved attending parent interviews. Parents also attend other meetings about topics like NCEA. While any parent contribution is valid, these interactions do not afford direct ownership of an academic role to parents. Secondary schools need to highlight explicitly, and facilitate, such roles in their parent body so that their resources are nurtured and become productive in their child’s PEP.

Further orientations towards the students’ PEP are embedded in the microsystem which facilitates understanding about the interconnectedness of information which may shape a child’s development. It is in the microsystem that the student is most directly involved in and impacted by social relationships and activities that build knowledge and skills, and experiences success or disappointments, and possibilities or constraints in developing their PEP.

The Microsystem: Practices and Capabilities

Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with his or her immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000). This layer forms a set of structures comprising school organisation, routines and expectations, with which a student has direct contact and where the influences are bi-directional; the student influences and is influenced by the microsystem. At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on the child (Berk, 2000). Bronfenbrenner also argues that as

children get older, they may react differently to environmental changes and may be more able to determine how that change will influence them. The kinds of attributes students need to engage successfully in PEP, and how they are involved in shaping their educational environments and experiences, is also likely to change with the maturation of the student. Consequently, a year 9 student may have a broader vision of their future plans and directions than a student who is focused at year 12 on a particular career or degree and is concerned about stair-casing subject choices. Important schooling systems and practices such as educational advisement, academic counselling and student tracking make up these organisational microsystems which impact on student learning and how they approach the PEP process.

In discussing the impact of the microsystems on the student, it is important to take into account the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that the student brings to these interactions. Consequently, the following initial sections will focus on important cognitive characteristics of students which have been found to have important influences on their learning and performance in schools and which are likely to impact on the PEP process.

Motivation and Self-regulation

In schooling, what, when and how we learn is influenced by motivation (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). For example, students who are highly motivated and have high expectations about their capabilities are more likely to learn more and perform better, as well as tend to engage in more adaptive approaches to learning (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Motivation therefore plays an important indirect role in students' negotiation of challenges in their PEP within different aspects of the microsystem. In much of the discussion that follows, an important recurrent theme will be how the various microsystem interactions can influence the different aspects of a students' motivation. In turn the nature and degree of motivation the student has is critically linked with their immediate and long term achievement, learning and management of their PEP.

Brophy (1998) describes motivation as the intensity and persistence of behavior and the degree to which students invest effort aimed at acquiring academic knowledge and skills. Motivation influences the quality of students' engagement in learning activities and thus indirectly their achievement in classrooms. As understanding is monitored and learning progress is measured, success builds perceived capabilities and sustains motivation. Someone who is motivated engages in sustained goal-driven activities, with high effort, persistence, and achievement (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Students' academic

motivation in the classroom is evident from their readiness to start academic tasks, the amount of effort they initiate and invest, their persistence with academic work when confronted with obstacles and distractions, as well as their selection of various tasks or courses of study (Anderman, 2013). Linking learning to students' interests has been identified in the literature as a way to improve motivation. Schunk and Mullen (2013) contend for example, that teachers' use of technology should appeal to today's students, thus increasing their motivation to learn.

Students' motivational beliefs are also influenced by situational and environmental variables such as school culture and organisational features (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). A principle of cognitive motivational theory which has particular relevance for PEP in this study is that facilitation rather than control should be the way to motivate individuals though a focus on their goals, beliefs, personal agency, and emotions (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). While controlling strategies such as threats, punishments and forced competition may have immediate effects for improving required behavior, when used repeatedly they can have negative consequences. Motivation, learning and performance are also affected by differences in student mindsets and dispositional orientations towards PEP embedded in the microsystem of the individual. Those with fixed mindsets accept that capabilities are set and that not a lot can be changed, whereas students with growth mindsets link ability with learning (Dweck, 2006). As one might predict, a fixed mindset would limit the ways in which students can address both successes and failures within school as well as the nature of the goals that they choose and focus on, whereas the growth mindset would be the more adaptive mindset to facilitate learning and change within school (Dweck, 2006).

Two other areas of motivational theory and research have been found to be helpful in understanding the initiation, maintenance and persistence of students' learning and performance: a) self-efficacy and, b) goal orientation (cf., Martin, 2013; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006). The following two sections will discuss relevant theory and research and link the relevant constructs to aspects of the microsystem which may have implications for supporting and facilitating students' PEP.

Self-efficacy

Social cognitive theory postulates that both learning and performance are influenced by motivation. Bandura (1993, 1997) expanded the scope of social cognitive theory to encompass learning and performance of cognitive, social, motor skills behaviours and strategies. People form outcome expectations about their given actions which influence their

level of motivation to engage in specific behaviours (Bandura, 1986). Outcome expectations refer to what a student expects the consequences would be to a specific course of action. Self-efficacy can be defined as individuals' confidence in their ability to successfully complete a task. Research shows that students with high levels of self-efficacy will persist at difficult tasks and seek challenges. Providing students with feedback on goal progress has been found to raise self-efficacy (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Heightened self-efficacy improves skills and sustains motivation, with goal setting and self-efficacy having especially powerful influences on self-regulation and academic attainment (Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Students' expectations can also be increased when they observe peer models who learn by expending effort and persisting further (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008).

Feedback that links students' successes to a combination of effort and ability has also been shown to improve self-efficacy (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006). Students with positive self-perceptions of their competence and expectancies of success are more likely to be adaptive in their approach to academic tasks as well as to choose similar tasks in the future (Eccles, 2005; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Successes generally raise self-efficacy while failures lower it and self-efficacy remains high as long as learners believe they can make the effort to succeed. Students holding low self-efficacy for accomplishing a task may avoid it. Students feel efficacious when persuaded that they are capable of learning by a trustworthy source such as a teacher, but may discount other sources if they believe they do not understand the task demands (Schunk & Miller, 2002).

According to Strayhorn (2013) whose research focused on higher education students, self-efficacy, motivation, and specifically a sense of belonging can play an important role in academic achievement. As Bandura (1986) postulates, self-efficacy and motivation coalesce because the former influences choice of activity, effort, and persistence. In a meta-analysis exploring students' self-efficacy beliefs Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) found an effect size of .38 in the relation between self-efficacy and academic performance. Self-efficacy beliefs accounted for approximately 14% of the variance in academic performance across student ages and settings most typically using testing skills, with the effect size larger for secondary school students than younger children. Self-efficacy effects were found to be stronger for secondary school students when self-efficacy and performance measures reflected specific rather than general tasks.

The conclusions of these researchers have relevance for this study in that they highlight the centrality of schools in encouraging personal growth in students' PEP journeys while providing them with development opportunities. Students' sense of autonomy and perceptions of autonomy support around their PEP are also integral in the development of self-efficacy (Reeve, 2002). Student self-efficacy impacts how the microsystems surrounding the student influence learning and performance and is therefore an important component in engaging with their PEP at school and beyond.

Goal orientation

Goal orientation refers to *why* students do what they do and goal setting is concerned with what students are aiming for (Martin, 2013). Students who set goals are better equipped to direct focus toward goal-relevant activities and avoid distractions if goals are challenging and provoke effort in accordance with difficulty level (Maehr & Zusho, 2009). Goal orientation theory focuses on mastery (also called learning or task goals) approach or avoidance; and performance (also called ego-involved, ability and self-enhancing goals) approach or avoidance (see Dweck, 1986). Mastery goals are adaptive for achievement outcomes such as effort, self-improvement and skill development while performance goal orientation focuses more on demonstrating ability and outperforming others (Martin, 2008).

Goals also create a dissonance between current and desired attainment, motivating an individual to reduce educational dissonance. When the task is personally motivating, mastery goals can positively impact academic performance as well as intrinsic motivation, even when confronted with obstacles and low self-efficacy (Grant & Dweck, 2003). In contrast, performance goals are more wide-ranging and may focus on gaining rewards or relieving self-doubt (Covington, 2000). The findings in the literature make important distinctions between the two different goal orientations and their effects on learners' understandings about success and failure in academic work. Long, Monoi, Harper, Knoblauch and Murphy (2007) examined the relations between goals and achievement in a two-year, cross-sectional investigation of eighth- and ninth-grade students specifically focused on motivation and GPA in a large, urban, predominantly African American, school district in the Midwest of America. Regression analyses of self-report levels of three motivational variables (self-efficacy beliefs, goal orientations, and domain interest) revealed that significant gender differences existed in goal orientation and achievement scores in both grades. Furthermore, self-efficacy and learning goals contributed to domain interests but the predictive value of these three motivational variables on achievement differed at

each grade level. This has significance for PEP as student awareness about making the ‘right decisions’ for their future pathways intensifies and becomes more important as they progress from junior through to senior school.

Negative responses are manifested when performance goals emphasise competitive practices related to self-esteem and where students believe success is related to ability and evaluate themselves negatively when experiencing difficulties (Dweck, 1986). The amount of publicly available social comparison in students’ scores and grades is also noted in the literature as lowering some students’ self-perceptions of competence. Brophy (2005) has suggested that teachers abandon performance goals that involve peer comparisons and promote performance goals directed to actual achievement. While learning goals are empowering for learners, performance goals in emphasising task completion and thereby a combination of self-worth with ability, can become restrictive. It has also been demonstrated in the literature that a lack of goal clarity or low motivation are potential contributors to poor grades. Learners’ focus should be on the nature of the learning required, so that they are clear about the purpose of the task, though evidence suggests that the setting of performance goals has been a prevalent tradition in school settings (Torrance & Pryor, 2001). The conclusions drawn suggest that teachers, advisors and learners need to develop strong understandings of the nature of goals so that the learners’ PEP is enhanced by that clarity. Within the students’ PEP context teaching students academic goal setting would seem a simple and reasonable solution initially to strengthen students’ focus when approaching tasks. Ultimately however, the way that students’ reasons for setting goals are influenced through goal orientation makes an effective dimension of PEP.

Goal Setting

Examining the students themselves and their orientations around learning gives useful insight into how a good model of personal educational planning can have effect. Goal setting as an important process in motivating students (Bandura, 1988, 1997; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006) has been shown to be a powerful and reliable determinant of action. Because goal-setting by students often occurs in PEP in collaboration with teachers and parents, that action can be located in the student’s various microsystems. It is this partnership between students, teachers and their parents that is a central component for effective PEP.

Locke and Latham (2002) contend that goal setting affects achievement through a number of mechanisms. Their model of the goal-achievement link suggests specific and difficult

goals lead to achievement and this connection is moderated by goal importance as well as task complexity. Much research suggests that challenging and specific goals are more likely to motivate students than general ones because they have a directive purpose, an energising capacity and they impact persistence. A goal-setting strategy that aligns an achieving goal with other goals, for example passing an exam as well as gaining a reward from parents, means that the student might do better than another with just one goal (Wentzel, 1999, 2000). If rewards are used, they should be given contingent on students' improving their capabilities (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). All of these orientations are embedded in PEP.

The link between academic goals and academic achievement

There is growing evidence in the literature that helping students to set academic goals improves grades (Diseth & Kobbeltveldt, 2010; Durik, Lovejoy, & Johnson, 2009; Harackiewicz, Durik, Barron, Linnenbrink-Garcia, & Tauer, 2008). Morisano and Locke (2013) found some preliminary evidence that an individual's taking time to write in detail about life goals (or personal goals) can also impact on success at school.

Anderman (2013) contends that the most instructionally effective classrooms are the ones that support students' sense that they engage in tasks and activities that reflect their personal values and sense of themselves as individual rather than because of compulsion, coercion or feelings of guilt" (p. 186). This view highlights the importance of students' ownership of their PEP and their need to invest in PEP decisions that are meaningful and relevant to them at school and in the future.

Personal best goals

A recent goal construct emerging from the educational psychology literature is a personal best (PB) approach to school work which has significant implications for how goal setting might be conducted in educational planning. Personal best goals are described as explicit, challenging and self-referenced targets which are pursued by individuals, such as spending more time on a current rather than previous assignment (Martin, 2013, p. 357). Essentially they combine mastery and performance orientations, the former because they are self-referenced and self-improvement based, the latter in that the student is competitive, but with his or her own previous performance. PB goals have been shown to have a positive effect on students' educational aspirations, persistence, class participation and enjoyment of school (Martin, 2006), and to predict actual achievement. Research on achievement goals has been broadened to include social goals, based on the recognition that students' social concerns

often predominate in the school domain over academic concerns (Rodkin & Ryan Jamieson & Wilson, 2013; Urdan & Maehr, 1995).

Social goals and peer affiliation

The group with which secondary school students identify and spend time creates a social network in the microsystem of perceived norms in relation to motivation, academic behaviours and aspirations. This social network is an important backdrop to PEP where the goal of gaining acceptance from peers can undermine academic motivation and achievement if that academic success is devalued by peers. Conversely academic motivation can be bolstered through maintaining bonds with high achieving friends annoyed by distracting behaviour (Urdan, 2013). The issue of adolescents being strongly influenced by peer pressure is widespread where adolescents select their friends partly on the basis of similarity. Berndt and Keefe (1992) found that students within a peer or friendship group over time, tended to become more similar in terms of their attitude and achievement at school. Peer group affiliation studies have identified students affiliated with higher achieving academically engaged students and found that these students become more academically engaged and performed better themselves over time (Chen, Chang, Lui, & He, 2008; Kindermann, 2007). In contrast, adolescents who engage in non-conforming behavior are more likely to have developed similar patterns themselves (Urdan, 2013). Where early research has suggested that students' social motivation undermines academic motivation, more recent research suggests that there is a more complex association between the two. The type of social goal and the values and behaviours of the person and group from whom approval is sought determine whether academic and social motivations work alongside or in opposition to one another. These issues are especially challenging for PEP since adolescent culture is focused so strongly on peer relationships. For effective focus, strong patterns of study, organisation and management may be shared by certain peer groups, while off task and distracting pressures from peers, including social goals through skipping classes, may detract from a student's ability to have consistent academic goals.

The goal setting partnership between teacher and learner

Martin (2011) advocates that secondary schools involved in the practice of teaching goal setting should encourage students to focus less on comparisons with others and "more on individually progressive standards of excellence" (p. 357). A student might choose to pursue a product goal such as a specific grade or may strive for a process goal which includes effort and skill development. It is now commonly recognised that goals must be achievable and

challenging (Hattie & Jaeger, 1998; Sadler, 1989). The setting and sharing of the short and long-term goals that students work towards are now considered to be an integral part of assessment and feedback processes. Additionally, learners can also be taught to attribute learning difficulties to causes they can control, such as low effort or poor use of strategies. As such, goals operate as important and relevant mechanisms of PEP since students need to develop an understanding of their learning issues and acknowledge reasons for their goal setting within this learning context. Such knowledge gives them agency to strive towards educational plans they may not have otherwise considered.

Schunk (2000) suggests that goals should encapsulate skills and strategies students need to acquire. Gaining insight into what this picture of goal setting might look like in the PEP context requires the support of secondary school teachers, guidance counsellors and parents (Anderman, 2013). In this partnership the learner needs to have a clear idea of their goals of learning and the criteria and standards by which they will be judged. How students are assisted to activate personally compelling and clear goals for completing a task; how they are helped to activate multiple goals and sustain emotions to facilitate, scaffold, and accomplish those goals relies in part on their teachers presenting ways to do this. A fine balance is called for in that students also need to understand the extent of their teachers' support of student autonomy and self-direction (compared to an emphasis on teacher control). Such a partnership would seem to enhance educational planning for the students in ways that increase students' ownership of their PEP.

Self-regulatory Learning

An overarching framework which encapsulates the motivational constructs and related activities described in the previous sections, can influence future learning, and is characterised in studies in secondary schools, is self-regulation. Self-regulation is the systematic effort to direct thoughts, feelings and actions towards the attainment of the individual's goals. Practices and capabilities such as motivational issues, goals, goal setting and personal accomplishments also contribute to an effective model of self-regulation which requires having the motivation to attain goals (Bandura, 1986). Zimmerman (2002) identified the process and nature of goals and goal setting as effective tools for secondary school students in enhancing their self-regulated learning processes. An increasing body of research supports the prediction that self-monitoring of achievement beliefs stimulates achievement and sustains learning efforts (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998, 2003; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992). However, students may not spontaneously self-evaluate,

and may rely on the teacher to do so. In drawing on Sadler's (1998) notion that feedback on performance is specifically intended to generate, improve and accelerate learning, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) refer to the degree to which students can regulate aspects of their motivation, behaviour and thinking as self-regulated learners:

self-regulation is manifested in the active monitoring and regulation of a number of different learning processes, eg. the setting of, and orientation towards, learning goals; the strategies used to achieve goals; the management of resources; the effort exerted; reactions to external feedback; the products produced. (p. 199)

Self-regulation is also a cyclical process because personal environmental and behavioural factors interact and change during learning and must be monitored. Patterns of the students' evolving construction of and engagement with their PEP which are self-regulatory in nature constitute elements of the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). With respect to learners, the literature classifies problem identification, commitment and management of such environments as important components of self-regulation. Changing students' beliefs about learning involves fostering the belief that competence or ability is a changeable, controllable aspect of development (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2013). Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulation has three phases; *the forethought* phase refers to processes before the actual performance, *the performance (volitional) control phase* involves processes during learning and the action and attention involved, while *the self-reflection phase* occurs after the performance when the people respond to their efforts. During the self-reflection period learners self-evaluate their progress and react to this evaluation.

A study by Di Benedetto and Zimmerman (2010) explored the self-regulatory processes of high school students who were high, average or low achievers in science. High achieving students applied more self-regulatory processes during each of the three phases and spent more time studying in science. Effective self-regulation is subject to students developing a sense of self-efficacy for self-regulating their learning and for performing well (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivee, 1991). Schunk and Ertmer (1999) found in their study of college undergraduates working on computer projects, that those students who evaluated their progress midway through the instructional programme had higher self-efficacy than those who assessed progress after each session. The findings suggest that students may require coaching in self-evaluation and regular opportunities for practice (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). While it is important to have strong self-regulatory practices in

learning, they will only lead to successful PEP decisions if they rely on good evidence and effective academic advisement and counselling.

Educational Planning and Academic Counselling

It is internationally recognised that students need assistance in navigating the microsystem within schools and accessing information so they can make informed decisions about school courses and programmes that meet their individual needs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Whiston et al., 2010). The range and concentration of PEP-like programmes and structures in international settings has been variable. A number have grown out of late twentieth century initiatives and continue to be shaped and refined, and are recognised for their most commonly occurring components between student and counsellor or teacher; academic counselling, goal setting and use of evidence based data. Engaging parents through academic advisement with students and teachers also features, while broader notions of PEP such as lifelong learning and encouraging a positive attitude to learning through life are also noted in the literature. Underpinning much of the research on PEP is the goal of helping students to become more effective and independent as learners, so that they can carry out their educational planning in a self-directed way.

Some research on guidance counselling has shown that it does not always lead to improved outcomes for all groups of students (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003). However, schools with comprehensive school counselling programmes have reported adequate educational preparation and better job preparation (Lapan et al., 2006; Whiston et al., 2010). The key driver of the development of US PEP programmes has been the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and Code of Ethics (ASCA, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). School counsellors, academics and state guidance officials have worked cooperatively to implement these programmes (Lapan, 2012). Evidence-based school counselling was identified as a component of these programmes along with data driven practices (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

A US Public Agenda study (2010) also found that students who received personalised counselling services related to pathways at school and future choices were more likely to go to university and receive financial scholarships. Conversely, findings have also suggested very large implementation gaps exist between schools in the US in delivering a comprehensive PEP programme to all students (e.g., Mau, 1995; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007). A decade before attention had been drawn to the national average ratio of student to counsellor of 479. Despite the ASCA almost halving this figure in 2010, questions have

been raised about how well one counsellor could serve the needs of so many individual students in their PEP. A recent national survey of high school and middle school counsellors found that the roles of counsellors needed to be more clearly defined, with accountability tracking for effectiveness. To maximise the impact of counselling across America they also needed to be integrated into reform efforts (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). The conclusions drawn have relevance for this study, in highlighting the importance of consistent and accountable structures in a nationwide approach that focuses on ongoing guidance.

The influence of what Americans called this “guidance outlook” (Wright, 2012) is evident in the Australian literature. The expanding role of schools in managing the development of children and adolescents in guiding them towards future citizenship and lifelong learning is reflected in PEP developments (Jenkins, 2000). A study by Warton (1997) examined links between Australian adolescents' achievement goal orientation and the information sources they used when making decisions about returning to school and selecting courses for the elective final two years. In addition students were asked to rate themselves on 25 items on a questionnaire assessing aspects of motivational goals. Findings suggest that those students who could benefit the most from seeking out academic counselling did not do so, despite its availability, and the influence of goal orientation extends far beyond classroom behaviour into the ways in which students decide about their academic and vocational futures (Warton, 1997).

Research in the UK highlights personal development planning (PDP) which has strong links to both PEP and lifelong learning. This type of PEP includes keeping a progress file beginning at secondary school to help make outcomes of learning more explicit, identify the achievements of learning, and support the concept that learning is a lifetime activity (Gough et al., 2003). It encompasses development within the secondary school learning environment and identifies big picture learning approaches related to PEP that students could utilise at school, in transitioning to university, and in life beyond school. A number of UK universities now use aspects of this PDP model to structure a systematic map for their students (Gough et al., 2003). The primary objective for PDP was to improve students' understanding of what and how they were learning, helping them to:

- become more effective, independent and self-confident self-directed learners
- understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context
- improve their general skills for study and career management

- articulate personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement
- encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life (Gough et al., 2003, p. 8).

Academic Counselling in the New Zealand Context

In contrast to the US, UK and Australia, movement toward the development of widespread academic counselling in New Zealand secondary schools is just beginning. Currently the Starpath initiative is working with 32 school programmes to help implement academic counselling after it was introduced and trialled successfully in a west Auckland School in 2009 (McKinley et al., 2009). However if a tally of formal academic counselling services were taken as the primary measure across all secondary schools nationally, it is likely that just some components of PEP are being practiced in a systemic way. This is possibly because of schools' independence in deciding whether to support its availability. On a national level therefore, it may be possible support services are officially available, but not compulsory. Hence PEP is still being carried out haphazardly.

New Zealand research on the importance of academic counselling and planning has initially led to a targeted policy area in the macrosystem. Similar to overseas studies, it appears that students who may need guidance the most, since they come from home environments where knowledge of the consequences of curricular choices may be not fully developed, are least likely to receive it in their schools (Hipkins, Roberts, Bolstad, & Ferral, 2006). This has raised questions as to how parents are supported to advise their children to make constructive subject and career decisions. Enhancing pathways to university, particularly for under-represented groups, has therefore been given policy and funding attention. Starpath research has suggested that once Māori and Pasifika students achieve the prerequisite 14 NCEA credits, they are just as likely to get UE as students from other ethnic groups.

The most commonly used intervention model to be trialled is that individual students meet with an academic counsellor (or coach) over a series of sessions (McKinley et al., 2009; Robertson & Norrie, 2011). Setting academic grade targets for students is integral to some academic counselling initiatives (Smith, 2007). Students and counsellors in the New Zealand studies discuss and document long term career and future study goals, medium term (NCEA) qualification goals to meet these long term goals, and additional short-term goals to meet these medium term goals (Robertson & Norrie, 2011, p. 12). Across the counselling discussions, progress toward these learning goals is tracked, highlighting a key finding that it was the activity of academic counselling that linked data and students' pathways.

Especially challenging is that within the international context of academic counselling New Zealand is at an early stage of development. While interventions may model good PEP practices, the likelihood of schools persisting with key strategies post-intervention is at issue. Since schools are the key players when it comes to the enactment of PEP, it is useful to survey specific and systemic approaches to the way PEP might operate sustainably in schools. These relate to the way PEP is experienced by the individual student and refer to a distinct set of specialised constructs and practices that assist in its organisation.

Student-Teacher Relationships

Pertinent to PEP, because a great deal rests on the interactions of the microsystem between teachers and students, is the issue of positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers are the most important mediators of knowledge within school. To enable the full spectrum of students to be successful, teachers need to understand how to initiate learning (Allday & Yell, 2013) as well as develop student ownership of that learning, an important underpinning element of PEP. Researchers have called attention to students' need to be supported in school by at least one adult who shows a genuine interest in their progress (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Whiston et al., 2011). Cornelius-White (2007) in a meta-analysis of 119 studies across several nations found principally beneficial links between positive student-teacher relationships. Hattie (2009) endorses such a view concluding that to share a common understanding of progress and have high expectations, teachers must "be concerned about the nature of their relationships with students" (p. 128). Cornelius-White (2007) suggests the best relationship occurs when the teacher can see the student's perspective, "communicate it back to them so that they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern" (p. 123).

Positive relationships are identified as an influential component in students' organisation and plans for their learning to be successful (Alton-Lee, 2003; Muijs & Reynolds, 2001). When tracking secondary school students over several years, it has been found that students who formed strong school relationships demonstrated higher educational expectations and were more likely to be involved in post-compulsory education two years after finishing school (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Wimberley, 2002). A positive relationship with a teacher, administrator or counsellor, who was interested in, and available to students, helped drive them to pursue their education and career objectives. Alton-Lee (2003) identified quality teaching as having the most influential effect on student outcomes:

Our best evidence internationally is what happens in classrooms through quality teaching and through the quality of the learning environment generated by the teacher and the students, is the key variable in explaining up to 59%, or even more, of the variance in student scores. (p. 2)

Teacher modelling, in terms of projecting enthusiasm, treating all students as if they are keen learners, and projecting a positive view of learning, have also been identified by Patrick, Hisley, Kempler and College (2000) as having an important effect on the quality of relationships teachers, deans, and advisors have with students. These findings are significant to how effectively a student's PEP might be implemented given that it is teachers who generate interactions with students and parents about the nature and basis of their educational pathways. Furthermore, because effective PEP might require new roles and responsibilities of teachers, how enthusiastically they embrace these new learning environments they experience, is of relevance.

Some research on student–teacher interactions has indicated significant differences in help-seeking behaviours relating to educational and vocational planning. Askew & Lodge (2000) in referring to the ways that teachers give feedback in secondary schools in the UK (remembering that vocational and educational guidance has been a longstanding practice of teachers) has argued that power still resides with the teacher or advisor/counsellor because the agenda for the feedback is decided by them. When the agenda is not decided by the person who receives feedback, it may not be useful to them, or they may not know how to make use of it. Askew critiques the receptive–transmission model, in which “feedback is a gift – the transmission of more information to help the learner make improvements” (p. 10). When control is located within one aspect of a teacher's role, it might have impact on how the relationship in PEP is described. The power relations that shape possibilities for students to make decisions and set goals for their own learning, or allow a ‘best fit’ by a more experienced and ‘wise’ advisor, counsellor, administrator or teacher do not seem to be transparent in the literature.

As noted in Chapter Two, using culture as an asset in the teaching and learning process both inside and beyond the classroom has been found to positively support students, particularly within the New Zealand context (Bishop, 2005). The literature suggests that Māori students can be constructively supported by having their backgrounds, their cognitive, social and cultural repertoires embedded into classroom activities (Bishop et al., 2010; McNaughton, 2002). Culturally competent teachers get to know the student by responding emotionally and cognitively, working to ensure that the learning environment, learning partnerships and

learning discussions acknowledge and respect the students' culture. Cultural responsiveness should also structure teacher interactions with their students' PEP, and partnerships that develop between teachers and parents about the students' educational pathways. These discussions between students, teachers and parents need to canvas wide-ranging issues related to PEP and can affect choices made after school.

Subject Choosing

Subject choices, course-taking patterns and their relationship to post-compulsory school options is an important dimension of how an individual student might navigate his or her educational pathway at secondary school (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003; Leach & Zepke, 2005; Madjar et al., 2009; Robertson & Norrie, 2011). Appropriate course choices, their successful completion, and progression to tertiary study or skilled employment have had specific attention in the literature (Hipkins et al., 2002; Maychell et al., 1998; Munro & Elsom, 2000). Gaps in course-taking, often established in early secondary school, were frequently maintained or even magnified as students progressed through school. Inappropriate choices can lead to students completing qualifications which do not meet entry requirements for university or other tertiary study, resulting in limited post-secondary education and employment options, or leaving school without any formal qualifications (Hipkins et al., 2002; Hodgkinson & Sparkes, 1993; Maychell, 1998). Students finding out too late that they have blocked choices they would like to pursue, or not understanding what prerequisites are required for specific secondary school courses and/or university entry level study are noted in the research as significant roadblocks to successful educational advancement and planning (Smith, 2010). In the US, African, Latino and Native American students in particular believed that they would be able to take any class at any time (Leitman et al., 1995). Although most students wanted to begin tertiary study, large numbers were not eligible because course requirements had not been met.

Warton and Cooney's (1997) Australian study of 1,048 16 year olds found little evidence that adolescents treat subject choice as a deliberately planned exercise in which information about alternative courses of action is systematically sought. In New Zealand, a 'Competent Learners' study of Years 9 and 10 students, identified that both students and their parents would have liked more guidance when making subject choices (Wylie & Hipkins, 2006). Though students tend to get subject choice advice from parents or caregivers rather than their school, in a study on motivation and NCEA, significant numbers of students reported that their parents did not understand the intricacies of the NCEA system (Meyer, McClure,

Walkey, McKenzie, & Weir, 2006). The researchers contended that parents might therefore be limited in their capacity to advise their children and support them in their NCEA course choices. This is all the more reason for effective transparency and consultation in the PEP process. Concerns have remained about the potential of NCEA to motivate students away from achieving their best, and towards collecting credits and opting for easier assessments, without sufficient focus on the long-term implications of their choices (Meyer et al., 2006). Given the importance of course-taking patterns, the research highlights that improving understanding about what circumstances need to be in place for students to set useful goals and make clear decisions is critical to enhancing their educational planning and achievement.

Success in the NCEA is a critical factor in the academic pathway of under-represented groups of students in tertiary education. Māori and Pasifika students in low decile schools have been engaging in fewer NCEA standards approved by the NZQA for UE. These students have tended to take fewer academic subjects, and unit standards rather than achievement standards (Hipkins, Vaughan, Beals, Ferral, & Gardiner, 2005). An earlier report *From Cabbages to Kings*, described how six selected schools endeavoured to meet their Year 11 students' needs through the subject choices offered to them (Hipkins et al., 2002). The title of the report captures an intention to break down distinctions between academic and 'cabbage' subjects. Such patterns of subject choices can act as a barrier to engagement with subjects that are required to complete the UE qualification and greater choice in educational pathways.

The Construct of Engagement

The importance of engagement across the developmental experience of secondary school years is also relevant across the life course of an individual (Furlong et al., 2003). In this study, the nature of engagement directly impinges on the practices and choices students make in relation to their PEP. Students motivated to learn about a particular topic tend to engage in systematic activities they believe will help them, such as asking for help when they do not understand the material and taking notes to promote further studying (Zimmerman, 2002). Conversely students unmotivated to learn are not as systematic in their learning habits, with haphazard note-taking, not asking for help and not monitoring their understanding (Pintrich, 2003). Underpinning these processes is the construct of engagement which is a predictor of academic performance and fundamental to understanding students' approaches to their PEP. The literature highlights the connection

between engagement, achievement and school behaviour across levels of social advantage and disadvantage (Willms, 2003). Engagement is considered the primary theoretical model for understanding how students drop out without school completion, graduation and sufficient social skills to enrol in post-secondary pathways and /or the world of work (Christenson et al., 2008; Finn, 2006). Hayes has acknowledged that personal agency can lead to self-exclusion from school when structural obstacles are too overpowering and students often get ‘disengaging messages’(Hayes, 2012 p. 643). In her view “an individual’s relationship to schooling shapes the type of learner they become and the type of economy that they are likely to participate in” (2012, p. 643).

While the structure of the education system is regulated and schools may have expectations of practice, it is students’ perspectives and experiences that substantively influence social and academic outcomes (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). Researchers in the US noted over 25 years ago that although attendance at high school was compulsory, engagement could not be legislated. This began a critical examination of the construct of engagement. Observation that far too many students are bored, unmotivated and uninvolved, and therefore disengaged from academic and social aspects of school life has led to an examination of academic, behavioural, cognitive and psychological components that connect with school (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Reschley & Christenson, 2006a, 2006b). Behavioural (e.g., positive conduct, participation, effort), cognitive (e.g., self-regulation, learning goals, investment in learning) and emotional or affective (interest, belonging, positive attitude towards learning participation) components are aspects of engagement useful in predicting, understanding and proactively intervening in the process by which students gradually disconnect from school and drop out (Doll & Hess, 2001).

Generally current research focuses on students’ thoughts and beliefs that shape and influence their engagement. These can include for example, students’ perceptions of how interesting (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002), important, or useful (Eccles, 1983) they find a specific subject or activity, how competent or confident they feel to perform a task satisfactorily (Bandura, 1997) and their beliefs about the reasons for their own successes and difficulties (Weiner, 1985). Hayes (2012) has referred to the need to reconnect students with learning – not schooling, emphasising that students can give up on school but not give up on learning. She highlights informal learning through interactions that are mutually beneficial and structured around interest and conversation. In this way an interest based approach to knowledge rather than one which is discipline focused is validated as important

for engaging students (Hayes, 2012). Researchers have also concluded that engaged students perceive more support from teachers and peers, creating a cycle of increased levels of engagement (Furrer, Skinner, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2006; Osterman, 1998). The importance of affective connections at school such as sense of belonging, sense of relatedness, and identification with school was explored by Baumeister and Leary (1995). These researchers found that humans have a natural need to belong with others where frequent contact between people is typically conflict free and where an ongoing relationship between them is essential. Likewise Voelk (1995) examined how school warmth influenced academic achievement in a study of 13,121 American eighth grade students and found an association between belonging and effort/persistence, suggesting a way in which the affective connection to school may impact academic achievement. Extending this argument Voelk (1997) reported on longitudinal results involving 1,335 African American and Caucasian students from 104 schools (grades 4-8) which also supported the link between participation, identification with school and student achievement. While every school has students who are engaged or disengaged (Appleton et al., 2008) it would seem understanding students' learning experiences in their PEP, their sense of belonging (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), and their desire to persist and navigate that educational journey effectively, also relies on their personal competency beliefs around that engagement.

Chapter Summary

Accepted ways of thinking about and implementing the PEP of the twenty-first century secondary school students are in the process of undergoing a number of discursive shifts globally and locally as a response to the political and educational policy environment. Bronfenbrenner's schema (1989, 2005) has provided a process-person-context model that highlights practical systems and conceptual structures and strategies that are typically employed by the student and provided by the secondary school to interpret and navigate PEP. The use of this model permits assessment of how an individual student might contribute to his or her development and ownership of PEP. Through an individual student's navigation and exploration of this broad coalition of systems, components and capabilities, emerges the shape of what an educational plan at school and beyond might consist of. Since this process lacks common definition in New Zealand secondary schooling, identifying what might seem an effective alignment of interconnected systems for the student remains challenging, more so because a process of reconceptualising that network is currently underway.

The framework of PEP emerging through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model has justified the importance of a number of key interconnections in the PEP journey, which include maximising supportive learning-focused relationships. This chapter had argued that the partnership between teachers, students, and their parents is a central component for effective academic advisement. Gathering and using assessment information contributes to shared clarity in this partnership. Goal setting and giving students opportunities, mechanisms and practice at reflecting on their learning and PEP is important, and requires restructuring of existing school processes such as the traditional parent/teacher interview. Building motivation, self-regulation and a strong sense of self-efficacy are further features of successful PEP through supportive partnerships between students and teachers as well as parents, who have not featured as active participants in the academic domain of New Zealand secondary schools.

International research findings, such as those investigating a comprehensive and legislated programmatic approach in the US, have shown that a national system of educational pathway support is a priority. When it comes to implementation in New Zealand, secondary schools and school systems which are self-organised have largely been left on their own to turn what they know about students' PEP into action. Recent interventions have helped nurture elements of academic counselling and data gathering, but as this chapter has demonstrated, they do not make up the whole picture of effective PEP. A key priority is making all components of PEP cohesive and transparent as a system or network for all those involved. Moreover, as new roles and responsibilities have been assigned to teachers, parents and learners, the need to up-skill, make shifts in thinking about student educational planning, and engage in mechanisms for development, have become evident. Accelerating the progress of students who are traditionally underserved by the education system to ensure the attainment of worthwhile qualifications and post-school options is a major priority. Good PEP decisions, as the research has demonstrated, need to be located within an advanced, organised picture of PEP that is able to be self-sustaining post-intervention. While there are many studies that describe elements of PEP and focus on processes involved, far fewer have investigated how students shape their own educational environments and PEP experiences. Though the significance of students' belonging and relatedness at school is given attention, there is little in the literature about the intentionality and detail of what students are actually involved in doing, and what happens to them around their PEP. Furthermore, whether students are satisfied and engaged with their educational planning, environments and contexts, and the quality of support they receive, does not seem

to have been a question asked of them. Since the school is a key player for finding out how value is being added to students' PEP, it would seem a good place to start to find out whether control and ownership of the process really does rest with the student.

The Next Chapter

The next chapter outlines the research process for the current study. A brief description of the research design is detailed and the role of student voice addressed. This chapter considers the approaches to the research and scopes the selection of the school and participants involved.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A Plan to Study Planning: Methodology

This study investigates practices relating to education planning at a New Zealand secondary school and the perceptions and experiences of those involved with, or impacted by its operation. Because educational planning has been intimated in MOE documents as a possible explanatory factor in the educational and occupational success of students in the contemporary context, gaining insights from a school which has invested structurally and philosophically in supporting the process seemed a useful way forward. Taking a case study approach has enabled a detailed contextual analysis of this contemporary issue. This chapter outlines the research process. The research questions are restated in the first section providing the justification for a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Here also, the rationale for the selection of the interpretive paradigm, the role of student voice, and case study research are discussed. A brief description of the two phases of the research design is presented in the second section. Procedures followed in Phases One and Two of the study relating to the selection of the school, students, teachers and parents are then discussed in the section on sampling. Participant profiles are given and the significance of ethnicity addressed. The forms of data collected are described and justified and the methods and processes applied in their collection are explained in the section on data collection. Information about data analyses and approaches utilised in the thesis are then outlined, followed by an explanation of the ways in which the necessary ethical considerations were addressed in carrying out the study. The chapter concludes with comment on how evaluative criteria for judging the trustworthiness of research were met throughout the process.

Methodology

Various research traditions have dictated how research should be conducted, what is worth knowing and what counts as evidence (Candy, 1989). Yet the way people have attempted to understand society and human action is informed by different epistemologies, ethical frameworks and political persuasions, many of which are embracing new methodologies (Schwandt, 2007). In the sorting, arranging, categorising, predicting and theorising of selected dimensions and issues, the researcher is challenged to locate herself as an inquirer somewhere in that systematic (but considerably debated) classification of approaches, traditions or paradigms. The choice/selection of research methodology influences the way in

which the inquiry may proceed and guides the research project. Any decisions, however, must also take account of the nature of the research questions.

Research Questions

This study was designed to investigate the systems a selected secondary school has established for helping students navigate their learning, performance and achievement, and the generation of plans for their future learning. Personal educational planning (PEP) is the term used in the research to describe how the individual student interfaces with all of these systems while at secondary school. Factors in this process can include subject-choosing, goal setting, management of data as well as guidance from school advisors and teachers. The research was particularly concerned with the experiences and perceptions of those involved in PEP. More explicitly the research sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the perceived and intended purposes of PEP within a senior secondary school context?
- What processes and procedures are employed to support PEP within a senior secondary school context?
- What kinds of synergising effects exist in this process and are they embedded in the mission and goals of the school?
- What are secondary school students' experiences and perceptions of PEP?
- What impact does PEP have on senior secondary school students?

Frameworks for Inquiry

Different ways of framing and researching social phenomena generate different kinds of understandings. An integral feature of any discussion about the nature of social science research is consideration of three generic elements: epistemology, ontology, and methodology. Ontological and epistemological assumptions (which relate respectively to the nature of reality and the nature of the relationship between the inquirer and the known) are central to the selection of a particular methodology. "How we know the world and how we gain knowledge of it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13) are premises which give shape and definition to the conduct of an inquiry which, along with the nature of the research questions, determine the selection of methodology (Burgess, 1984; Guba & Lincoln, 1990). Taken collectively these three elements often denote a research paradigm or framework of beliefs, values and outlooks that guide decision-making across a discipline (Kuhn, 1970).

Research paradigms are broadly conceptualised in the literature as positivist, interpretivist, critical, and constructivist (Candy, 1989; Neuman, 2006). Though having some features in common these paradigms have distinguishing boundaries (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) and can be categorised as presenting either quantitative or qualitative approaches to inquiry (McMillan, 2000). In general, a quantitative approach emphasises reducing numerical data to quantifiable explanations; exploring relationships between variables and manipulating variables to measure and identify effects. In contrast, and grounded in the assumption that objective reality cannot be captured and measured, a qualitative approach is a non-statistical means of analysing and interpreting data and places emphasis on the words and actions of participants and on their interpretation of the world.

Mixed Methods

The predominating view that quantitative and qualitative methods could not be used together (Davidson & Tolich, 2003) has more recently been challenged by the ways people attempt to understand their environments and the function research performs for diverse purposes and different audiences (Lincoln et al., 2011). Consequently the boundaries between qualitative and quantitative approaches have become less distinct as research into social phenomena has become more complex (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Aldridge and Levine (2001) have advanced the argument that research has both elements where the patterns in quantitative research are by definition numeric and elements traditionally numbered in qualitative research are qualities.

The difference in the two approaches, Punch (2005) contends, rests in the type of data sought and the methods used for collecting and analysing the data. He has argued that a combination of approaches increases the power, scope and depth of the research. Questions about how methods should be combined (Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Morse & Niehaus, 2009) have led researchers to think about mixed methods as a separate design in the social sciences. The view that research should not treat quantitative and qualitative methods as mutually exclusive in meeting a research agenda as expressed through the research questions, was of significance for this investigation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). At the same time, the concern of the study was with understanding the phenomenon PEP from the subjective experiences of individuals. It therefore falls within the interpretive paradigm.

The Interpretive Paradigm

Interpretive inquiry denotes those approaches to studying social life that assume the meaning of human action is inherent in that action. The aim of the inquirer is to uncover that meaning and deepen knowledge of how social life is perceived and why it is perceived this way. According to Cohen et al. (2000) qualitative approaches “penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis” (p. 181). Researchers working within an interpretive framework view knowledge as contextually bound and socially constructed – reality is constructed via individual and/or collective interpretation and meaning. Emphasis is therefore placed on people as interacting social beings who generate and reinforce shared meaning (Neuman, 2006). So that the subjective meanings people attach to their actions can be grasped and made intelligible, researchers position themselves alongside participants (Scott & Usher, 1999). They observe and interact with participants in their natural setting “in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2006, p. 88). Actions are therefore interpreted in relation to a network of participants’ intentions, motives, or purposes. Candy (1989, p. 5) identified five commonly shared assumptions that underlie approaches and methodologies in the interpretive mode:

- action is explicable in terms of multiple interacting events, factors, or processes;
- the attainment of complete objectivity is not possible;
- the aim of inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual cases rather than universal laws/generalisations;
- the world is made up of tangible and intangible multifaceted realities which are best studied in context as a unified whole;
- inquiry is always value laden and as such, values inevitably influence the framing, bounding and focusing of research problems.

This study is mainly suited to interpretive inquiry in that it aims to produce an account that describes a phenomenon occurring in one site. The aim is to uncover the interaction of significant factors that characterise the phenomenon of PEP within that site. From an ontological perspective, the effect of various social and ideological structures in the formation and determination of PEP for students is of interest. An investigation of how PEP is experienced addresses epistemological concerns about how the participants are shaped by and can shape their environment. Finally in examining how these experiences are interpreted and the nature of the participants’ understandings about PEP, it is recognised

that the interaction between the researcher and the participants is subjective. As such the interpretive paradigm and notions of understanding, meaning and action (Scott & Usher, 1999) are to the fore and considered to be at the centre of inquiry for the research.

Student Voice

Since an interpretive approach aims to provide a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under investigation, exploring student voice through viewpoints, insights and perceptions as they relate to PEP would seem a crucial aspect of the research. In relation to the researcher's theoretical positions, aims and values in relation to qualitative research, I am conscious that I, as researcher, am selecting, editing and can "give voice" to participants (Fine, 2002, p. 218). According to Bernal (2002) voice can mean not only having a researcher's voice in the text but also letting research participants speak for themselves. Having the reader hear the students through the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) regarding the practical realities of their daily PEP routines as well as the new challenges they might confront, is key to making sense of the actions and practices of those involved. In the past secondary students' voices have generally been heard only from token representatives on school councils dealing with pastoral matters, but more recently student voice has become legitimated around conversations related to teaching and learning (Fielding, 2012).

Case Study Approach

A case study approach was considered particularly appropriate for this inquiry because of its ability to privilege depth over breadth and illuminate unique features of PEP by paying attention to participants' experiences and diverse ways of acting in the same situations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Gomm & Hammersley, 2001). The term case study can refer to the research process (Yin, 2003), the end product (Wolcott, 1992) and/or an object under study which Merriam (1998) and Stake (2008) define as an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person, process, institution or community). The central defining point for this case was the school, but the reason the school was chosen was because of its commitment to PEP.

Stake (2008) calls the focus on an individual unit a "functioning specific" or "bounded system" (pp. 119–120). The current case is bounded by:

- a specific setting (secondary school in Auckland);
- time (March 2011–December 2012);
- senior student year group (years 12–13) and;
- personnel (those involved in PEP at this school, during this time, with students in these year groups).

Case studies have been classified in various ways. Some writers focus on their interpretive, descriptive and evaluative intent (Merriam, 1998). An interpretive case study aims to move beyond the rich detail of the descriptive case through a close analysis of the data with the intention of developing explanatory concepts or theory. An evaluative study emphasises explanation, appraisal and judgement (Merriam, 1998). Stake (2000) has classified case studies that focus on the understanding of a particular phenomenon as intrinsic, those examining a particular case to gain insight into a theory or issue as instrumental, and those aimed at gaining a full picture through a series of studies as collective. The collective category may be in addition to one of the others. The current study was intrinsic in nature with an interpretive intent. I was primarily concerned with providing a detailed, holistic account of PEP that was grounded in the rich and variable lived experiences of the participants with the aim of furthering understanding of PEP. In Phase Two of the research, this was examined closely along with the impact PEP had on individuals from three groups which were classified as engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged in the PEP process. Through identifying the participants at critical times of the year, and examining possible within-case contextual differences when students and others were engaged in processes such as subject choosing, career advice discussions, teacher, student and parent conferencing, there was opportunity “to speak with weight about the phenomenon at hand” (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 314).

Case studies have also been characterised as particularistic, descriptive and/or heuristic (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). They are particularistic because of their concern with a specific individual, group, phenomenon or situation grounded in everyday practice (Merriam, 1998). The concern of this case was PEP as reported through the experiences of the students, as well as the types of opportunities teachers and parents provided to assist the students’ evaluative and productive knowledge within the PEP process. Using the case study approach also enabled me to gain rich, thick descriptions of the complexities of the practice, perceptions and experiences of PEP in the selected secondary school context. Investigating such aspects of this issue over a prolonged period of time, provided access to a range of

voices within a context of completeness (Merriam, 1998). However, as an isolated case study, its prime purpose was not heuristic. It was not attempting to provide possible explanations, or attempting to uncover “previously unknown relationships and variables ... leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied” (Stake, 1995, p. 47). This did not rule out the possibility that the research would uncover insights that might stimulate theoretical thinking.

The particularistic nature of case study opens it up to critique for its lack of representativeness and its perceived inability to generalise from a single case to a wider population and/or context (Cohen et al., 2000; Denscombe, 2007). However, it is possible that close study of one unit might enable a more general aspect of the issue to be illuminated. The current study provides an holistic account of PEP with reference to the specific context in which it is embedded. The reader may see similarities between the situation described and their own experiences, allowing them to see instances where findings and conclusions could be applied to other settings and circumstances. Flyvbjerg (2011) has suggested that while case study “is a detailed examination of a single example, it is wrong that a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class” (p. 301). This process relies on the reader’s personal judgment of transferability from the setting under study to other settings, and is dependent on the case study providing a detailed description of the study’s context (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2006; Stenhouse, 1985). While this study is concerned with a single school where the phenomenon of PEP is investigated on its own terms, it is possible that the perceptions and experiences of those involved in PEP in this site may have meaning for and resonate with others in similar secondary schooling situations.

The Research Design

This research presents a descriptive and interpretive case study of PEP in one school. As indicated in Table 1, it was designed as a two-phased sequential approach involving multiple methods of data collection. The aim of the first phase of the inquiry was to gain an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of PEP through the eyes of students, teachers, parents, whānau leaders and others in the real world setting of the secondary school. Because it was intended to scope perceptions of PEP, a quantitative approach using a survey was administered. This enabled collection of a comprehensive amount of data across the research setting through canvassing the views of a large number of people. It also functioned in Phase One as a sampling tool for selecting the student participants which in

turn identified teaching staff and parents who would be approached to be part of the research. Phase One of the research involved a quantitative component, followed by a qualitative component (semi-structured interviews) that included a small nested quantitative component (the survey). The aim of the second phase of the study was to explore the differential impact (if any) of PEP over a period of more than one year as seen through the eyes of three students who had been identified as disengaged, semi-engaged and engaged students. Participants in this part of the study were purposively selected from those in Phase One. Phase Two was qualitative in nature, again including a concurrent small, nested quantitative component completed at the semi-structured interviews.

Table 1. The research design

Data collection	Participants
<i>Phase One</i>	
Individual surveys	5 whānau leaders (with whānau tutor teachers) 882 students (including 509 senior students)
Individual semi-structured interviews	27 students consisting of engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged learners 10 school staff including teachers, whānau tutors and leaders, career advisor(s) and the principal 6 parents
Focus group interview	5 parents
PEP related materials	
<i>Phase Two</i>	
Individual surveys	3 students (one engaged; one semi-engaged and one disengaged learner)
Individual semi-structured interviews at critical times.	Students, selected teaching staff and/or parents as appropriate
Audio-taping of PEP meetings between student, teachers and/or parent	
PEP related materials	

Sampling

The sampling used in this study for selecting the target school relied on the selection of a location which would provide opportunities to gain understandings of PEP in action.

Specifically this included the purpose(s) of PEP, the processes and procedures employed to support and further PEP, students' experiences of PEP, and the impact of PEP on students. The first phase of the research began in April 2011. The participants were year 11-13 students, parents, teachers and whānau leaders of year 11-13 students, the career advisor(s) and the principal (see Table 1). These groups of people were selected for individual semi-structured interviews because they each had a unique perspective on PEP. The second phase began later in the same academic year and focused on 3 of the year 13 students who participated in Phase One. A group of people familiar with each student's experiences was also interviewed and in this phase, one of the teacher participants was nominated by the student.

Selection of School

An important aspect of the research process is identifying the delimitations and limitations of a project (Wolcott, 2009). The current research was delimited in that the investigation was focused solely on one school. While I could have considered a range of schools representing a variety of socioeconomic composition, I believed that limiting the research to one school would ensure the manageability of the project and enable me to gain a rich description of the processes of PEP. One school would provide a working picture of the "temporal, ritual and routine features" (Denzin, 1989, p. 87) of the students', teachers' and parents' social actions under study within the context of PEP. The participating school was selected on the basis of responses to a series of questions in a data request form that was distributed to principals from a representative sample of school types in Auckland. These questions addressed the nature of the system(s) the school had for helping students to navigate their learning, performance and achievement and the generating of plans for their future learning.

The selected school needed to have a system in place and be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of PEP through the documentation provided. Of the schools that responded, two agreed to participate in the study and returned the Request For School Data Form. Others declined, citing grounds of pressure, time constraints, key staff already involved in research projects and different goals, commitments and priorities for the year. The two schools were similar demographically. Both were low decile, with one having a large cohort of Pasifika and significant number of Māori students and the other having a large cohort of Māori students and a significant number of Pasifika students. To this end the School Data Form was the deciding factor and revealed that one school in particular had a

significant range of support networks in place for the PEP of its students. A school with a population of students traditionally under-represented at tertiary was considered a good fit for a project that was interested in examining the significance of students' PEP perceptions and experiences. The principal of the school was contacted, thanked and a visit arranged so that informal visits to the school to become familiar with the people and activities could occur. The principal of the other school was contacted, thanked and the basis for their exclusion explained.

Establishing the Survey Questions for Selecting the Students

As a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviours and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences, the core constructs of self-regulated learning established a rationale for the seven questions in the survey that were the sampling tool for selecting the students. The ability for students to self-regulate their learning is recognised as an important determinant of school success and more generally as being crucial to lifelong learning (Boekaerts, 1997). The previous chapter identified a framework for motivation and self-regulatory learning theory, research and applications (see for example Zimmerman, 2002; Schunk & Ertmer, 1999; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). The literature showed that self-regulated learning is a motivationally driven process related to numerous motivational beliefs (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002). When students are motivated to learn they are more likely to invest the necessary time and energy needed to learn and apply appropriate self-regulated learning skills. Pajares (2006) has identified such practices and skills as including but not limited to: "finishing homework assignments by deadlines, studying when there are other interesting things to do, concentrating on school subjects, taking useful class notes of class instruction, using the library for information for class assignments, effectively planning schoolwork, effectively organizing schoolwork, remembering information presented in class and textbooks, arranging a place to study at home without distractions, motivating oneself to do schoolwork, and participating in class discussions" (Pajares, 2006 p.356-357). In drawing from such practices, the intentions of the survey questions were to provide insight into student academic motivation and management of their PEP, while also keeping the survey short and simple for effective engagement. Pintrich (2003) has outlined self-regulated learning as evaluation of competencies in specific areas- metacognitively, behaviourally and motivationally which offers a useful framework. Given these current views of self-regulated learning the seven survey questions included questions which focused on metacognitive-

belief in achieving in subjects, having clear goals for studies at school, behavioural-meeting deadlines, attending class regularly and motivational- driving own learning, persistence when faced with challenges, having clear goals for what I will do when I leave school attributes of the students' self-regulated learning. These related items combined to establish a framework of responses that could be analysed by looking for patterns in those responses.

Categories that Led to the Grouping of Students

Many empirical studies explore characteristics of individual members within a given population based on responses to set questions. In this case the population was a collection of complex social individuals (school students) and the aim was to determine their membership categorisation. The previous chapter has highlighted students' thoughts and beliefs that shape and influence their engagement (see for example Furrer, Skinner, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2006; Reschley & Christenson, 2006b; Willms, 2003). It was intended that the students' personal competency beliefs around that engagement would be reflected through their understandings of the stem questions in the survey. Therefore the survey established a framework for student membership categorisation resulting in a predefined three way variation of engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged in the population. These definitive categories encompassed all students, so that no students were redundant or in categories that overlapped. As well as providing manageable categories within which the research could be conducted, the survey also allowed for additional insight into ongoing developments in the Phase Two students' responses to their PEP which could lead to incremental change in categorisation. The engagement survey did not aim at establishing frequencies, means or other parameters, but was a way of determining intra-group positioning of the school population, reflecting the diversity of student attitudes to PEP.

Selection of Students

The target population was senior students (year 11–13) because they would have had at least three years PEP within the school and as such were more likely to be in a position to reflect on and describe past experiences in addition to current practices and understandings. It was also likely that senior students would be more cognisant of the stakes in terms of senior assessment pressures and imminent future plans. From the year 11 to 13 students who completed the survey, students were selected for interview using the principles of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In theoretical sampling participants are usually chosen

by the knowledge that emerges in the course of the study. In this study the principal basis on which students were selected to be interviewed was the data generated by the student engagement survey. The survey, completed by whānau leaders with tutor teachers, and all students in the school, focused on the seven attributes discussed previously which were considered essential in a PEP process at school.

Given the mainly interpretive, qualitative nature of the research, where the aim was to produce an account that described the phenomena occurring in one site (Candy, 1989), anywhere between 15-30 student participants was considered sufficient. In order to capture a cross section of students' perceptions and experiences in Phase One, three groups of year 12 and 13 students were identified as being fully engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged learners. Their selection for the interview was based in the first instance on survey responses, and was then dependent on their availability to be interviewed when I was in the school. The target of 27 student interviews, making up groups of nine engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged students, was checked and confirmed as a representative sample of the gender and cultural demographic of the school. Finally, in selecting students representing different levels of engagement, confirmation was sought from the whānau leaders and tutor teachers who had also agreed to participate in the survey. These teachers had worked with and taught the students for up to five years so were able to employ all their knowledge of the students' PEP through the survey. Tutor teachers were also asked to assist with the distribution and collection of the participant information sheets and consent forms. For Phase Two, three of the year 12 students who participated in Phase One were selected based on information gathered regarding the degree to which they were engaged in their educational planning.

Significance of Ethnicity in the Sample

The rationale for selecting the students for interview through the survey was to have a diverse sample that had the potential to yield "rich descriptions" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 9). Ethnicity and years of experience (year group) at school were also included in the survey indicators. As previously discussed in the selection of the school site, a school where a large number of students were from low socioeconomic communities, and who are traditionally under-represented at the tertiary level, was perceived to offer a research context that would have optimum bearing on students' PEP. This was also considered significant given the Ministry of Education's concern to improve outcomes for students who were officially identified as priority learners in Ministry discourse. The characteristics of a low

decile environment resonated with connections noted in the literature between socioeconomic status, ethnicity, success at school and aspirations beyond school. Therefore it was considered possible that there may be valuable insights to be gained from the study about a role for PEP in mediating the achievement and opportunity gaps between learners from low income and minority groups and their more privileged peers.

Selection of Teachers

The issue of sampling was reduced to some extent because of the intention to work on just one school site which was identifiable and bounded. In March 2011, I was invited to a staff meeting by the principal (after several informal visits to the school) where the study was outlined and explained and verbal and written invitations to participate in the research were distributed. In order to find out the perceived and intended purposes as well as the processes and procedures employed to support PEP within the school, those interviewed within Phase One included staff who represented roles with significant responsibility for the students' PEP. It was also considered important to select teachers in positions that were based on the most significant differences - beginning teacher, senior teacher, head of department, deputy principal and principal. The profiles of the teachers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teacher participants

Phase 1 teachers	Date interviewed	Role at school
Miriam	14/04/11	Head of Learning(HoD): Timetabler
Alexandra	29/04/11	Principal
Monique	7/04/11	Whānau Leader (Dean)
Kiri	7/04/11	Whānau Tutor Learning Leader
Tai	4/07/11	Te Kotahitanga Facilitator/Whānau Leader
Kelly	6/04/11	Year 1 Learning Leader
Tessa	7/04/11	Year 2 learning Leader
Ella	8/04/11	DP: PEP co-ordinator
Moana	22/06/11	Acting Facilitator: Independent Learning Centre
Aria	27/07/11	DP: Line Manager Careers

Selection of Parents

In Phase One, parents' views of intentions, processes and procedures of PEP were also sought, irrespective of whether their son/daughter was involved in the study. The school management team distributed information sheets to parents through their networks, and senior students who wished to, took information sheets home. Three parents, who were aware of the study through their connections to the school and who expressed an interest, were interviewed. However with work commitments (often shift work) and small children, it became difficult to gain a representative group of participating parents that reflected the cultural make-up of the school. Consequently it was decided to approach the Pasifika Komiti in the school who agreed, after reading the information sheets, to devote the first part of their monthly meeting to a focus group interview. The decision to participate in a focus group rather than individual interviews was on the grounds that it was more convenient (it was to be conducted in a time the parents had already put aside for school matters), and the group meeting resembled a Pasifika talanoa session, and was therefore a culturally preferred option. This, according to Vaolete (2006) means that the meeting took the form of "a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations" (p. 21). To this end five consent forms were returned. In total eleven parents were interviewed. Three further parents, whose children had been selected for Phase Two of the study (see section on Selection of Students), were also interviewed in Phase Two. These parents also had other children at the school. The profiles of the parent participants are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Parent participants

Phase 1 and 2 parents	Date interviewed	Demographic
Deborah	17/08/11	Pakeha: year 12 child
Rochai	17/08/11	Māori: year 12 child
Jenny	15/08/11	Pakeha: year 10, 12, 13 children
Maia	23/03/13	Māori: year 10, 13 children
Wiremu	23/03/13	Māori/Samoan: year 10, 13 children
Hine	14/02/13	Māori: year 11, 13 children
Sale (grandparent)	9/11/11	Cook Island: year 9, 2 children
Primrose		Tongan: year 13 child
Afa	Focus Group	Samoan: year 9 child
Hohepa		Māori/Samoan: year 12 child

Data Collection

Table 4. Overview of participants, data collection methods, and research questions

Phase 1 March 2011– November 2011	Student	Year	Ethnicity	Data collection date	Data collection methods	Teachers and parents	Data collection date
Key focus					Survey		
<p>To investigate the experiences and perceptions of those involved in personal educational planning (PEP)</p> <p>To investigate the perceived and intended purposes of PEP</p> <p>To investigate processes and procedures employed to support PEP within a senior secondary school context</p>	Engaged				Individual Semi- structured interviews	Teachers	
	Liliena	12	Pasifika	13/4/11		Miriam	14/4/11
	Rawiri	13	Māori	14/4/11		Alexandra	29/4/11
	Raj	12	Indian	13/4/11		Monique	7/4/11
	Metiria	13	Māori	13/5/11		Tai	4/7/11
	Jack	12	Pakeha	14/4/11		Kiri	7/4/11
	Tamsin	12	Pakeha	13/4/11		Kelly	6/4/11
	Pia	12	Māori/Pas	17/6/11		Tessa	7/4/11
	Ra	12	Māori/Pas	2/6/11		Ella	8/4/11
	Vika	13	Asian	13/4/11		Moana	22/6/11
	Semi-engaged				Focus Group Interview	Parents	
	Pita	12	Māori	14/4/11		Ingrid	17/8/11
	Malu	12	Pasifika	2/6/11		Jenny	15/8/11
	Ripeka	13	Māori	14/4/11		Rochai	17/8/11
	Rafik	13	Asian	21/6/11		Sale	9/11/11
	Eliza	13	Pakeha	17/6/11		Primrose	9/11/11
	Keta	13	Māori	31/5/11		Afa	9/11/11
	Mereana	12	Māori	26/5/11		Hohepa	9/11/11
	Pule	12	Pasifika	17/6/11		Ane	9/11/11
	Fernandez	12	Other	16/8/11			
Disengaged				Field notes	Reading of PEP materials		
Felicia	13	Pasifika	26/5/11				
Waka	12	Māori	3/5/11				
Rima		Māori	24/8/11				
Viliani	12	Pasifika	7/11/11				
Sonny	12	Māori	3/6/11				
Troy	12	Pakeha	7/10/11				
Ula	13	Pasifika	24/8/11				
Piri	12	Māori	7/10/11				
Roimata	11	Māori	24/8/11				
Phase 2 November 2011– March 2013 Key focus	Student					Teacher	Parent
<p>To probe student PEP decisions, intentions beliefs and practices.</p> <p>To investigate the impact of PEP in depth.</p>	Ra	13 (E)	Māori/Pas	8/11/11 17/3/12 PEP mtg (14/05/12) 30/11/12	Surveys Semi- structured Interviews	Maria Katie	Maia Wiremu
	Mereana	13 (SE)	Māori	7/11/11 28/3/12 PEP mtg (17/05/12) 5/11/12	Recording of PEP meeting	Rebecca Wai	<i>Rihimona</i> (Not interviewed)
	Sonny	13 (D)	Māori	7/11/11 24/03/12 PEP mtg (15/05/12) 7/11/12	Reading of PEP materials and records	Max Ingrid	Hine

Data Collection

Mixed method design is characterised by a separate analysis of each phase of data collection (Creswell, 2008; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). It is generally accepted that qualitative techniques such as constant comparative techniques and thematic analysis should be used for qualitative data and quantitative techniques for quantitative data. There is agreement however, that integration in the discussion and conclusion is essential (Lincoln et al., 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In this research integration occurred at the data collection stage initially through the sampling decisions from the survey for Phase One and later through the nested quantitative/qualitative phase in Phase Two when the three students completed the engagement surveys prior to each interview. These surveys highlighted the ongoing importance of student voice (Fielding, 2012) as well as raising consciousness about the longitudinal nature of the research objective and the extent to which the participants might see themselves engaged in their PEP. What would count as evidence in the current study needed to be given careful consideration and how best to capture that evidence was a crucial methodological concern. Table 4 provides an overview of the participants and data gathering approaches, which are indexed to the key research questions.

The Implementation of the Engagement Survey

Surveys are suitable when research is concerned with questions regarding self (Neuman, 2006) and as a device for selection of participants from a larger population of potential participants. Two versions of a student engagement survey were used in this study to capture beliefs and reflections on specific aspects of student engagement in their PEP. As referred to previously one was completed by all students in the school, the other was completed by whānau leaders of senior students in collaboration with whānau tutors.

For the first five questions (*belief in achieving in subjects, driving own learning, persistence when faced with challenges, meeting deadlines, attending class regularly*) participants were asked to rate them along the following dimensions: *all of the time, some of the time and never*. For the last two questions (*having clear goals for studies at school, having clear goals for what I will do when I leave school*) participants were asked to rate them along the following dimensions: *very clear, not very clear and unclear*. After the attributes and questions were developed, the researcher and supervisors checked their relevance to the research question. Changes involved rewording the indicators so that they were easily accessible to participants. The research questions were investigated from more than one perspective that ensured thorough coverage and knowledge about the topic (Denzin, 1970).

As part of the selection process for identifying groups of engaged, semi-engaged, and disengaged students, 882 students completed the survey. Although it was my intention to survey only senior students, at the request of the principal and senior management team, who felt that the survey would be a useful instrument for analysing student habits and responses to the PEP systems within the school, the survey was administered in whānau time to all students, both junior and senior. The student engagement survey completed by the students was administered in the same week to that completed by the whānau leaders and tutors (March 2011).

As indicated earlier, 27 students (9 in each engagement group) participated in Phase One and were identified through a combined process of purposive sampling (responses on engagement survey) and convenience sampling (availability for interviews). An ‘adequate’ number of student participants was required with the objective of obtaining maximum variation (Merriam, 1998). To this end the profiles of engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged student participants were sought in order to answer the research question from a range of different perspectives. The survey completed by staff sought their perceptions of the attributes relating to the senior students to support identification of disengaged, semi-engaged and engaged student groups to be participants in subsequent aspects of the research. Depth, detail and within-case variance were sought in the sampling process (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

Through the identification of explicit criteria in the engagement survey and the students’ particular information and consistent discourse from the individual interviews within Phase One, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select the Phase Two participants (Schwandt, 2007). Essentially three year 12 students who typically matched the profiles of each of the three engaged groupings (engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged learners) were invited to participate in Phase Two. In Phase Two, from November 2011 until November 2012, the three selected students, repeated the engagement survey to monitor changes over time.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed in both phases of the study (see Table 1). The literature makes a distinction between structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews with the major distinguishing factor being the degree of control the researcher has over the questions and responses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Denscombe, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate type for the current research project in that

they provided me opportunities to probe into students' complex, embedded assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about PEP and gauge their perceptions of practice (Bryman, 2006). Keeping the interviews fairly conversational and situational was helpful in establishing a relaxed context for the interview. I anticipated having a relationship with the students extending up to two years, so I was able to follow-up on any unexpected issues that arose and probe participants for clarification or further explanation (Brenner, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007). The nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility as well as being able to generate comparable data across participants, as occurred in this study, where the interviews attempted to capture a strong construct of evidence about PEP.

Phase Two of the study, which was informed by responses from Phase One was undertaken during the period March 2011–November 2012 and involved three of the twenty-seven students selected from Phase One, their parents, whānau leaders and teachers nominated by the students (Table 2). During this phase, data were also collected using the engagement survey. Because this was completed at the outset of the three student interviews, each participant was asked questions that required elaboration of their particular survey responses. Questions in this phase probed understandings of specific PEP experiences. Opportunities that might be influential and/or factors that set up barriers for the three students' were canvassed. These interviews enabled me to explore student perceptions of the significance of their PEP over time, as well as those of their parents and teachers. Finally, an additional recording was made of a discussion between the student and their whānau tutor, and in one case a parent, of the student's progress on their educational journey. Though these meetings were recorded without the researcher's observations, they served as an event that supported the case study aim, allowing for subsequent analysis of the transcripts. While it was recognised that the recorder might inhibit conversation it was considered likely to be less intrusive than the presence of an outsider.

The Focus Group Interview

Focus groups allow the researcher to get more information from more people in a shorter space of time (Hays, 2004; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). Though not the original intention of the research design, one focus group interview occurred because the group interaction was deemed a necessary function to gain the perceptions of a representative demographic of parent participants. To this end the interview was conducted in a similar way to that of the semi-structured questions, the only change being my function as researcher became that of facilitator of the conversation, rather than interviewer (Bohnsack,

2004). Focus group discussion is stimulated within the group rather than being directed at the researcher. It is possible that some participants are reticent about expressing their views in front of others narrowing the possibility of eliciting as much information as might occur in an individual interview (Cohen et al., 2007). In the current study common themes and contrasts could be compared to the individual interviews (Kleiber, 2004).

The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule for the students in Phase One was divided into sections; general conceptions and beliefs about the students' engagement; students' understanding of subject-choosing and pre-requisites for subjects; students' experiences of support meetings and seeking advice; students' understandings of managing their data and their views on organising efficient learning; and goals at school and in the future. The questions aimed to probe students' understandings about the nature and role of PEP systems within the school; their beliefs about their progress within a PEP system and the strategies, experiences, practices and recognised importance the students had within their own process of PEP. The rhetoric of the school context, philosophy and naturally occurring interactions related to PEP were also embedded in the interviews. Similarly, questions for the parents, teachers (and principal) in Phase One addressed the purpose(s) and nature of the PEP programme at the school; perceptions of the programme; experiences within the programme; who was involved and; respective roles and responsibilities (see indicative questions Appendix A).

Piloting the Interview Schedule

As the key to obtaining rich data from interviews is to ask good questions (Merriam, 1998), the interview schedule was piloted prior to data collection with two students and one teacher. The two students were from a similar co-educational school to that in the study and the teacher was from a private single sex girls' school which had a strong PEP focus. The pilot interviews were conducted in a context that was as authentic as possible, and proved to be helpful. After one student interview I became aware that the term 'personal educational planning' was not completely accessible, nor viewed as a system, though these aspects were clear to the teacher interviewed. Cognisant that the nature of a 'PEP system' could typically be viewed as a series of (possibly fragmented) components and support networks rather than a cohesive structure, this was not of particular concern. More importantly, the questions referring to PEP that were confusing or unclear were reworded. The students in the pilot also had difficulty responding to questions about the future. Therefore questions were

reframed to *Where will you be in 5-10 years' time?* and *Do you think forward?* with the aim of yielding greater clarity of what the question was asking and therefore more useful data.

Conducting the Interviews

Interviews were conducted in Phase One with the teachers March–July 2011 and parents August–November 2011. The twenty-seven students were interviewed in the intervening period. The interviews for the teachers and parents (including the focus group interview) took between 35 and 90 minutes, while those with the students took between 20 and 55 minutes. All interviews, including those with the parents were conducted in a neutral meeting room space, familiar in particular to students and teachers. The focus group for the parents was conducted in the staffroom. Interviews in Phase Two were undertaken in November 2011, March 2012 and November 2012 and the recorded PEP meetings were held in May 2012.

With the participants' permission all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriber, who signed a confidentiality agreement. Transcripts were made available for checking although no participants made amendments. In Phase Two, each of the three students was given an audio recorder and asked to audiotape one PEP related meeting with key personnel without the presence of the researcher. Consent of all involved was obtained prior to any recording. Students and parents had the option also of turning off the tape at any time. This audio data was not only a rich source in its own right, but it also provided corroboration of data from the semi-structured interviews and strengthened the credibility of the findings (Bryman, 2006). The audio recordings were transcribed in order to ascertain themes and practices which were illustrative of the ways in which the students interpreted and experienced PEP.

PEP Materials

According to Punch (2005), a “distinguishing feature of our society may well be the vast array of ‘documentary evidence’ which is routinely compiled and retained” (p. 184). This can be of a formal, official or institutional nature, and often publicly available, or of a less formal, personalised and more private nature (Wharton, 2006). All such evidence holds valuable information that can provide insights in the same way as other qualitative data to produce understandings of a particular social phenomenon. A range of materials used in the school to support the students in their PEP was consulted to gain a sense of the ways in which the ethos of PEP was disseminated as everyday prompts for students. I felt that

coupling insights from these materials with interviews would create a richer data collection and possibilities for gaining more comprehensive findings (Prior, 2004).

Materials are primarily, but not necessarily, available in text form (Flick, 2011), and it was textual evidence that provided an important source of information in Phase One of this study. These materials consisted of school policy statements, student diaries, whānau leader information sheets, communications to parents, student data tracking information and logs. Of particular significance was the public display of the school's learning philosophy in a variety of spaces. All of these materials formed a data source that I reviewed in an ongoing way (Denscombe, 2007) and because of their diverse nature – including both public and personal items – had the advantage of offering insights into the espoused purpose(s) and nature of PEP and the respective roles and responsibilities of those involved.

When analysing the materials, I had to remember that they were products of human activity and social discourses located within particular social, historical or administrative conditions and structures (Punch, 2005). They needed therefore to be understood as a social tool used by various societal actors as a means of creating and sustaining a preferred philosophy and its associated practices (Denscombe, 2007). Delamont (2002) alerts researchers to the need to be aware to the fact that textual materials are written for particular audiences and represent particular points of view. In sourcing documents from individual students, for example, I needed to be mindful of the audience, context, authors' motives and the meanings ascribed to the materials by the participants.

Data Analysis

Collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data within a study has both benefits and challenges. In this study some components were collected sequentially, but where concurrent data collection occurred, I have referred to one being nested in the other (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It is at the point of analysis that the benefits of the mutual interaction and influence of quantitative and qualitative elements of the research are most apparent (Creswell, 2008). This involves the researcher moving back and forth over “tracks of analysis” (Alford, 1998, p. 29).

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative research involves undertaking systematic empirical investigation which provides quantifiable mathematical or numerical data that can be analysed using statistical or computational techniques (Given, 2008). The understanding is that “measurement

provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships” (Recker, 2013, p. 67). My analysis of the data, however, was descriptive. I was not seeking to test a hypothesis, to determine a cause/effect relationship, or to support a theory, so it did not involve inferential analysis. I was interested in providing simple summaries about the sample and about the range of responses through describing, aggregating and presenting the data in a visual form, as graphs that were able to be understood without a comprehensive understanding of inferential statistical analysis. As is typical of data analysis involving descriptive statistics, the tables presented provide the sample size and sizes of significant sub-groups by ethnicity. I believed that, in tandem with simple written description of the main features of the information, the visual summaries, as the basis of the description of the data, provided a sufficient understanding of the information gained through the survey.

My intention in conducting the survey was two-fold. Firstly, the data provided an overview for the student context of the study related to important aspects of PEP, and against which the voracity of students’ qualitative comments from their interviews could be compared, and secondly, in revealing patterns for identification of the students as engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged, it provided a sampling tool from which participants could be selected for subsequent elements of the research. The process of analysis for this purpose is outlined in the section on sampling above.

Qualitative Analysis

Making sense of qualitative data through breaking down and interpreting what other people have said and what the researcher has seen and read is a complex process (Creswell, 2003). In this research, data analysis was informed by two approaches; thematic analysis and the constant comparative method. The procedures were used concurrently, although sampling decisions for Phase Two required a preliminary analysis of Phase One data.

The flexibility of thematic analysis underscored its usefulness in generating a rich and complex interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involved looking for themes, concepts or patterns in the data that were gathered with the groups of participants and that reflected threads of meaning that emerge from their comments as a group. Ezzy (2002) notes that “while the general issues that are of interest are determined prior to analysis, the specific nature of the categories and themes to be explored are not pre-determined” (p. 88). Themes may therefore be deduced and/or induced from the data. Breaking data down to manageable and meaningful units of analysis to reveal what is important and has been

learned can be a staged process (Bogdan & Bliken, 1992). The PEP materials were analysed in terms of how they might contribute to the thematic analysis.

The constant comparative method which is a feature of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) aims to generate theory or explanation in a systematic way through explicit coding and categorisation. The constant comparative method and thematic analysis employ similar techniques for analysing data (Ezzy, 2002) and in the current research open, axial and selective coding strategies were used. Concepts central to the PEP process, such as 'using processes and procedures to support PEP, developing relevant knowledge in regard to PEP', and 'setting goals' became categories and were used as fundamental openers (Neuman, 2006) to investigate the data. Other categories were created inductively, emerging out of the data and subsequently becoming a category.

The first stage of coding is exploratory and termed 'open-coding' which involves coding the data in multiple ways (Ezzy, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My initial reading of the data identified key words, phrases and ideas, and took note of what appeared to be significant issues, behaviours and events that were raised. I then made further notes of possible categories and relationships that emerged from the interview data that seemed to fit together, and also noted responses that I would not have anticipated. This ensured that I was maintaining focus on the context, a factor that (Bryman, 2006) suggests is often overlooked. Simultaneously, as part of the coding process and along with developing my commentary, three specific profiles of the twenty-seven students, engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged were developed around the concepts and categories that began to emerge from the data. Student responses were then integrated with those of the parents and teachers, where each group was summarised with key words used by the participants. These were supported by large portions of raw data to hold as direct quotations.

In Phase Two, similar profiles were established for the three selected participants but these were summarised in greater descriptive depth than in Phase One. Additionally the data extracted from the teachers' and parents' semi-structured interviews and PEP meetings was integrated into these descriptions in the axial coding stage. Through the reassembly of the established open coding steps, connections were made between possible categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), bringing the focus to the initial coded categories and subcategories rather than the data (Neuman, 2006). Identification of patterned response or meaning within the data led to the development of themes and sub themes, which were refined and reviewed in computer folders where selective coding began. This process was helpful for giving

structure to a large theme and demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data. A further consideration was ensuring that the themes both cohered meaningfully and had clear and identifiable distinctions between them (Braun & Clarke, 2006) while representing the main premise of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In Phase One, I sought to provide a rich thematic description of the entire data set so that overall predominant and important themes emerged. In Phase Two, the reality of the sociocultural contexts of the three students, the structural conditions within which they experienced PEP, as well as the ways in which PEP impacted on them as individuals, was investigated and presented through three individual vignettes.

Ethical Considerations

Social science research can intrude significantly into the lives of participants, and researchers are morally obliged to protect the participants as much as possible from negative outcomes (Punch, 2005). Given that the relationships between the researcher and those studied are typified by extended personal interactions, the researcher has an obligation to anticipate potential ethical dilemmas and be guided by ethical principles such as avoiding misrepresentation, protecting the interests of participants and ensuring participants are fully informed in giving consent to participate (Cohen et al., 2000; Denscombe, 2007; Neuman, 2006). It is usual to conceive of the ethical obligations of the researcher to the researched as a contract (Schwandt, 2007). To ensure that ethical principles had been taken into consideration in the planning of the research, a formal application to the University of Auckland's Human Participants Ethics Committee was made in 2010. Approval was granted on 8th September 2010, Reference Number 2010/355.

Informed voluntary consent

A central ethical principle of social research is that involvement must be voluntary and participants informed honestly about the nature of the research project (Cohen et al., 2007). Providing potential participants with sufficient information about the research so that they make a reasoned judgment about whether they want to participate is an ethical obligation of the researcher. Such information should include a clear explanation of the nature and aims of the research, its anticipated duration, the extent and nature of participant involvement, and ways in which participant interests would be protected. This information was provided in both written and verbal forms to potential participants to ensure they had an opportunity to deliberate on, and ask questions about the research and their own part in it, before signing

their voluntary consent. Participants were assured that they were free to withdraw from the research, or withdraw data that they had provided, at any time until a specified date, without having to provide a reason for their decision. However, the option to withdraw data was not available for those who had participated in the focus group, since the withdrawal of one participant implied the withdrawal of the whole group. For an example of a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) see Appendix B and of a Consent Form (CF) see Appendix C.

For this project consent to access a site of preference first had to be gained. A letter inviting an expression of interest for the research to be conducted in their school (Appendix D) and a PIS outlining the project was sent to principals of secondary schools from a sample of 32 Auckland state coeducational schools. Included was a Request For School Data Form (Appendix E) for the principal to complete and send to the researcher if he/she were interested in the school being a site for the study, as well as a stamped addressed envelope for reply. Site access was gained from the school principal on behalf of the school Board of Trustees.

In consenting to participate in the project the principal was asked to guarantee that the decisions of teachers, deans, advisors and counsellors whether or not to participate in the study would not impact their employment or relationships within the school, and that the decisions of students whether to participate or not in the research study would not affect their grades or relationships within the school. Phase One of the research required consent from students, parents and teachers who had expressed interest in participation. All potential participants were given a PIS and CF to help inform their decisions whether or not to participate. They were provided with opportunities to ask questions through the researcher's being available during designated school break times. For the most part students 16 years and over were selected as potential participants, so informed consent from parents/caregivers was not obligatory. However, students were given the option of gaining parent/caregiver consent to their involvement in the study if they so desired. For one student parental consent was necessary because she was under 16 years of age.

The three students selected for Phase Two were contacted by phone, invited to participate in the second phase of the study and sent a participant information sheet. Once selection was made, they were also asked to consent to being further interviewed at critical times over the course of 14 months through to the completion of year 13. All three consented and were asked to identify key people involved in their PEP process. These personnel, if they had not already consented to participate through Phase One, were invited to participate in the study

through the formal process of PIS and CF. In one instance a whānau leader declined to be involved. Because teachers and students within that whānau had consented to participate, the Deputy Principal with responsibility for PEP in the school suggested that she perform the function of categorising the students in the engagement survey as they were known to her (for a copy of the Engagement Survey see Appendix F). An information sheet was sent to the parents of each of the students in Phase Two informing them of the project. For Phase Two, permission was also sought to audiotape meetings that might include the student, relevant PEP support staff, and/or parents, and students were asked for any materials that was used as part of these discussions/meetings.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Trust and commitment to confidentiality are considered central to ethical research. In the current study the rights of participants to anonymity and confidentiality were respected at all times. As Clark, Prosser and Wiles (2010) have noted, “[to] act ethically is to value integrity, inclusiveness, personal security, privacy and dignity” (p. 90). In terms of confidentiality and anonymity the school principal and all participants were assured that involvement in the study was kept private and confidential, and information would be restricted to the researcher, the research supervisors and the professional transcriber. Although anonymity could not be preserved in the quantitative phase of the research project since the engagement surveys sought membership for the three groups, they were assured that to ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms would be used for the school and all participants in both coding the data and reporting the research in the thesis and in any resultant publications. It was noted on the PIS, however, that because of the small sample size, members of the school community might be able to identify individual participants. It was also explained to focus group participants that the small group size could compromise confidentiality and anonymity. Focus group participants were encouraged to maintain confidentiality of information shared during the session and asked to maintain confidentiality about the identities of fellow participants. To further ensure the privacy of participants’ data, a confidentiality agreement was signed by the professional transcriber of all audio-taped data (see Appendix G). The PIS included details about the storage and disposal of data. The participants in the study were assured that all documentation that was collected by the researcher would be kept private/confidential as defined by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

Minimisation of Risk

Addressing ethical issues in social research requires consideration of the researcher's own and others' actions during the conduct of the research since involvement can hold potential risks for participants (Schwandt, 2007). As noted above, for teacher participants in the current study assurance was sought from the school principal that their choice to participate or not would not influence the teachers' employment and standing in the school. Similar assurance was sought from the principal with regard to students invited, where the choice of students to participate or not would in no way influence their school grades or standing in the school.

Trustworthiness and Dependability of the Qualitative/Quantitative Data

Trustworthiness of research can be approached through careful attention to the way data are collected, analysed and interpreted and how the findings are presented (Merriam, 1998). Triangulation, the practice of collecting data over time, using several data collection methods and studying a range of participants in one research study, enabled examination of PEP from more than one vantage point, supporting the credibility of the findings (Schwandt, 2007). Data were triangulated through using both quantitative data in the engagement surveys and qualitative data from the semi-structured individual, focus group interviews, and whānau leader–student–parent interviews. This enriched the data and contributed to the trustworthiness of the research. A further means of triangulation, checking the integrity of the inferences drawn, was the collection and analysis of materials related to school policies and student artefacts which occurred in both phases of the study.

In reformulating the traditional criteria of validity and reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have argued that findings in qualitative inquiry can only be determined trustworthy if the four criteria of credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability are applied. Credibility is connected to establishing the 'truth value' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the research findings. This is generally achieved through prolonged engagement in the field which helps the researcher to better understand the culture of those being studied, to build trust and test for distortion. Sustained investigation during the course of 2011 in Phase One of the study and more specifically throughout 2012 in Phase Two enabled a reflexive approach which included strategies of peer debriefing with academic supervisors.

Confirmability relates to the researcher's standpoint and the effect of their subjectivity on findings. Because researchers themselves are part of the world they study, and observations

and analyses are filtered through the researcher's worldview, achieving a completely objective stance is extremely problematic (Denscombe, 2002; Merriam, 1998). Fine (2006) has argued that strong objectivity is only achieved when researchers work through their own positionality and values. Also important, as a researcher, is to recognise the positionality of the participants as well. In the current project the research process was made clear and notes were made as process checks throughout. Participants in the study were able to verify their transcripts. Member checks (Merriam, 1998) in the research involved asking for confirmation and verification of information contributed by them (Punch, 2005) making any alterations they saw fit and thereby focusing on procedures for dependability as well as confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

In qualitative research, transferability, or the extent to which conclusions may represent a wider population or context, places an onus on the researcher to build and present a case through thick description. This makes transferability judgements more viable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). To this end, the words and interpretations of the participants were faithfully recorded and used to provide an authentic account of their perceptions and experiences of PEP. Readers can then make their own assessment about the transferability of findings and conclusions. Finally, dependability is concerned with the consistency of the results obtained from the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A systematic audit trail is provided in the current research recording the research process from data collection to conclusions drawn (Bryman, 2006). Research notebooks served to facilitate researcher reflexivity and allowed for emerging analysis and insights as well as areas for follow-up.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research processes followed in the study in terms of methodology and design. Justification for a mixed methods approach has been addressed where the research has both quantitative and qualitative approaches and the role of student voice is included. Research questions have been detailed and sampling procedures justified. The profiles of the participants have been outlined and ethical considerations are addressed. Finally, the processes and procedures related to the collection and analysis of the data for investigating the perceptions and experiences of those involved in personal educational planning (PEP) at a New Zealand secondary school are defined. Taken as a whole the detail provided in this chapter, together with the evidence in the appendices and in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight provide a trail from which data to conclusions can be tracked.

The Next Chapter

In Chapter Five the first group of research findings is detailed. This chapter reports on the understandings of intended purposes of PEP held by the teachers and parents interviewed in phase one of the research, the processes and procedures involved and the self-reported practices of the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Owning the Vision

In Chapter Five the data generated from the fifteen individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, and the focus group with five parents are presented. It was anticipated that the teachers and parents in this study would not simply identify the officially recognised purposes of PEP at senior secondary school level and the supporting processes and procedures that were in place at the school in which the study took place, but might also convey their perceptions of the purposes of this practice. The first part of the chapter is organised to highlight participants' articulations about the schools' philosophy and foundation in Māori kaupapa and how these might underpin a students' PEP journey. Perceptions of leadership, relationships and understandings of intentions around student PEP are addressed. Particular attention is paid to the notion of the independent self-regulated learner in this overview which considers the significance of learning conversations, goal setting, reflection and the students' ability to think forward.

The second section of the chapter outlines processes and procedures employed to support and influence the PEP context within the school, from a range of participants' comments. The role of structures such as the Careers Centre, Whānau Systems, the Independent Learning Centre and Home School Partnerships in promoting opportunities for the discussion of students' progress is examined. The place of students' diaries, data management and academic counselling in PEP is addressed, while guidance of initiatives such as Te Kotahitanga and 3D Episodes is investigated. The kinds of synergising effects that exist through these systems are surveyed in relationship to how they reflect the mission and goals of the school. This snapshot of information gathered from parents and teachers constructs a picture of the PEP context within the school through understanding how its philosophy aligns with processes around PEP, and specifically how a student might navigate their PEP within it.

Perceived and Intended Purposes of PEP

The School and Philosophy

Situated in Auckland, the decile 3 case study school has been given the pseudonym Orua College in this thesis. About one third of the students are Māori, and almost one third are Pasifika. Although it is a relatively new school that opened with a small roll, this had

quadrupled in the first five years and continues to grow steadily, so systems and processes have needed constant modification. The chance to input into a new school allowed for innovation around the learning philosophy and pathways of the students. *We had time to kind of reflect that learning was the important thing and that learning had to drive things* (Miriam: Head of Learning, HoD, Timetabler). The fact that initially at least there were no pre-set expectations or traditions was viewed by the foundation staff as:

a really exciting sort of opportunity and with no senior school it wasn't going to be kind of assessment driven, it was more learning driven with I think different educational outcomes from the traditional measures of success and now we've grown to a full school we've reverted back a little bit to some of those because of university expectations. So as you grow it actually becomes harder to sustain some of those innovations and get kids to see the value of learning for life rather than learning to get two credits or that sort of thing. (Ella: DP: PEP co-ordinator)

PEP was not the first obvious priority but was embedded in the emerging qualities expected of learners:

We really want our kids to leave with the independent learning qualities around the school. So while it wasn't a central process, it [PEP] very much sat in the background of what we want the kids to leave [with]. Working on your own, it was independent, so you could manage, select and evaluate your learning, which is probably underpinning your educational planning and your pathway. (Alexandra: Principal)

Creating new systems and structures within the school gave opportunity to fit the physical environment to its developing character. Orua College was set up with open commons sited around each of the 5 houses/whānau. Elitism was discouraged, so there was no Head Boy or Head Girl but 10 shared leadership roles from each whānau, making up a team of 50. One distinctive feature of the school is the three 100 minute periods a day which staff described positively:

You can actually do some deep thinking, you can change activities. It gives you time to get around and actually make sure that you've had a conversation with every learner. It gives them time to go through a process of embedding new ideas and trying things out. We cut down on the opportunity for interactions in the playground which often leads to trouble. They spend more time in the classroom actually learning and it's much easier to build those relationships that are really important. (Miriam)

Titles for roles in the school are also different and carefully considered in early planning. Teachers are called learning leaders, form teachers whānau tutors and homework is home learning. *So we didn't have heads of department, it was about heads of learning, learning*

took over so learning conversations became the norm as opposed to behaviour conversations (Alexandra). There is no detention system but a review of learning (Aria: DP: Line Manager Careers). Moving away from traditional secondary school discourse has flow on effects, according to Ella:

Change the language, you change the association with it. Parents, they go, don't be so PC, but for me it does give a stronger emphasis in terms of learning. You think of the old view of a teacher who was a person who disseminated knowledge and they were the foundation of knowledge. I think this implies the nature of learning has changed in the twenty-first century.

Ella reported on the research benefits for the staff in the initial setting up of the school with a term plus to read without kids. *How lovely! So they did a whole lot of research in the UK and Australia, not much in New Zealand.* This pattern of inquiry continued on through think tanks and random conversations. Underlying attitudes to learning were based on changing world views of education and learning in a nation which *relies on people to be more critical thinkers and that sort of thing, apply knowledge rather than just use it* (Ella). A further research experience with personnel from NZCER included the staff engaging closely with qualitative research which brought insight and clarification for Ella. *I could talk about stuff but I didn't have the skills to analyse it, I guess, [when] investigating into some of the core learning issues that the staff were keen to address* (Ella).

Consequently, 10 qualities of learning that the school felt were fundamental to development were established as part of the culture and vision of Orua College and these were embedded into school life. *We've got these qualities ... and you go into other schools and they say that's their vision, but you don't see it anywhere* (Alexandra). Consequently the 10 independent learning qualities are on the wall in the main school foyer, in every classroom, in student diaries and on reports. *They're displayed everywhere. They're reminding every student to reflect on where their learning is at* (Tai). This shared vision was significant for Monique. *This is the first school I've worked in that has a common vision, I feel, that doesn't change every two years.* Monique had been drawn to the school's philosophy:

I was in a Decile 10 girls' school before here so it was very different. What attracted me here was the focus on the learning which sounds odd because you think all schools have a focus on learning. But I spent a day here, and thought, what am I doing in a school like I am at when I could be at a school like this? I was just really impressed with the quality of conversations that kids were having with their teachers. (Monique: Whānau Leader, Dean)

Staff readily acknowledged that Orua College was a school open to embracing change. Tessa provides the perspective of a beginning teacher:

When I was on placement, the schools that I went to had tutor programmes, but quite traditional in terms of what it was about. I kind of felt like it was just a bit of time where you checked the roll, said the notices. (Tessa: Year 2 Learning Leader)

Staff frequently referred to the major goal of producing independent learners. *So the independent learner for me is somebody that can make decisions for themselves with the support of staff in whatever role they take. So it's about ownership (Tai).* Their role was to assist in the development of *independent learning qualities to support the student's pathway to becoming an independent learner. We try and set that up right from the outset (Kiri: Whānau Tutor and Learning Leader).* The whānau tutors and learning leaders embraced these qualities as part of their pedagogy which drew from the school philosophy of 'the four Cs' that underpinned the whānau values and Independent Learning Qualities (ILQs).

The first one is all about connections, so building connection with their whānau and their learning and new friends or whatever. So we try and get them to make a goal around each of these. And then the second one in term two is character. The third one is confidence and the last one is like competence. (Tessa)

As Ella explained, students *'are quite conversant with them and they live them day to day and can articulate that.* As the years progress the depth and scope of their PEP increases for the individual student.

The structure of it is different. But the underlying message is the same. So within the seniors they will be asked more about forward planning ideas, where do they want to go as well as their goals for within school (Monique)

Learning leaders talked about PEP being *embedded in the school system (Kiri)* and that staff were *not too bad at student voice (Miriam).* Staff mentioned the constant revisiting of deliberate strategies to enhance PEP: *We felt that student ownership and choice for instance would be core examples of authentic learning (Ella).* The benefits of such priorities continued to be emphasised:

In terms of learners taking greater ownership, it's becoming more and more common. So even with our learning teams, our year nines last term had to do a reflection that went on their reports. And they then had to think about what it was they had set goals on that term, how were they taking ownership for where they were at in class, not just passing a responsibility on to a learning leader or whatever. (Tessa)

The school has a high retention rate of senior students at years 12 and 13, with many being the first in the family to complete five years of secondary education. There were varied views as to the benefits of this:

With all the youth guarantee free courses now they're 16 and 17, why would you come to school where you're only like going to do tech one class out of seven, when you can go to MIT and do tech all day, especially for free if you're on a youth guarantee course? But I think it's their status in having your child in Year 13 amongst maybe the Pacific and Māori community. (Monique)

The Foundation of Māori Kaupapa

An important focus in the setting up of the new school was to align its philosophy with Māori kaupapa. Aria, a current DP and foundation staff member, described her input: *Well very strong Māori, bicultural standpoint I came with and from. So I really wanted to put that mark on this brand new school. That you could see it, you could hear it, you could feel it.* Situated at the boundary of overlapping tribal authorities, the school's geographical siting created a challenge because it could not rely on the automatic response and infrastructure of its Māori community:

The hardest thing has been to address what we call mana whenua ... the people who are pertinent to the land. As a transitional place it doesn't have that strong mana whenua base because there's no real marae and iwi and whānau that belong here. So that's the interesting big gap we've got. (Aria)

As a twenty-first century school, opportunities to make a mark extended to the school's physical as well as philosophical dimensions:

We're all based around whānau. And also having the marae in the middle, because on the initial plans it was in the back there somewhere, or right on the front by the road. Because in some people's thinking it was okay, you just come straight off the road, you don't disturb the rest of the school. Have the Māoris up the front or the Māoris down the back, one of the two. And we thought no, it's in the centre, it's the heart of the school. (Aria)

Protocols embedded in the school, such as the year 9 powhiri, were an important part of reaching out to the parent community: *And we're noticing now that there's quite a large number of parents coming in for that, so that's quite a big event which is pretty exciting (Ella).* The school also facilitated restorative justice practices which:

came from the Māori concept of family justice. Family taking care of righting wrongs ... where we might have family conferences when something goes wrong. Parents really find that quite an uplifting process and a very safe, process so their voice is heard, rather than just the straight discipline kind of system. (Aria)

Leadership

Leadership for Alexandra, who had been a foundation staff member, encompassed a broad range of activity including students' PEP. She believed in doing duty every day in the school and endeavoured when pressure of the role permitted, to go on camps and trips with students. She explains:

I see my role a little bit as an enabler and a strategist to ensure that the resourcing is there to ensure that it's filtrated right down. It's not just in the hands of the careers adviser or a dean, that it's every adult that a kid comes in contact with helps them in that processing

The school's open door policy enabled students to visit, as well as email any staff member including the principal. Alexandra taught a year 9 class and for her, retaining a teaching role was an important credibility factor:

If people are coming to me, or the DP's are saying this is going on, I've actually got to experience it. There is the 'on the balcony view' and 'on the dance floor view'. And if you're on a balcony it's a different look from being on the dance floor and you have to be able to move between the two. You can't stay at one level because you'll miss out on what it sounds like, feels like, at other levels. But I think you need to be able to move from balcony to dance floor to just seeing what it's like and what's going on to then work out how you could, if it needs changing, change it, or what needs tweaking. (Alexandra)

Alexandra's leadership role included encouraging staff to work outside their comfort zones at times:

There's a couple of made up trapezes hanging in the staff room at the moment and one of our sayings was to get to the next trapeze you've got to let go of the first one. We can't change everything you know, like you can't make everybody jump to the next trapeze, but you've got to at least try to get them swinging it and sort of moving and not just sitting there waiting. They've got to be swinging and trying to get there. (Alexandra)

All of the staff talked about the large amount of professional learning and development (PLD) they had had, and how they had got 'smarter' in the target and focus of this, as sometimes it felt as if there was too much. A lot of PLD was about change within the new school which also brought challenges:

We were fortunate we got the twenty-first century buildings, but you've still got a degree of twentieth century teachers. I'm not putting them down in any way, but kids have changed, I've heard something better than change the other day. It was about exchange, because change suggests you've got to stop doing what you're doing, that you don't necessarily get anything back in return whereas if you exchange

something, if you exchange a set of behaviours it just seems a bit more reciprocal. (Alexandra).

Creating a school-wide environment that supported individuals to meet challenges could sometimes mean that there was a level of discomfort which leadership had to account for:

It's just about making the right environment for teachers as well. John Edwards, an Australian guy, we talked a lot a few years ago about the pit, if you want to do any transformational learning, first of all you've got to get worse before you get better, and it's when you go into the pit. And it's okay to be in the pit, it's just not okay to stay there for a long time because that's when you feel lost. So you know we had a number of teachers saying, I'm in the pit [Alexandra]. You've got to make sure that people are happy to go into the pit because they know it's not going to be forever and that the pit is going to allow them to get somewhere else. (Alexandra)

Relationships

Building strong relationships were constantly reported as an important dimension of Orua College's philosophy. *One of our key things is building relationships and people come in and say there's a nice feel to the school or kids will have conversations and talk to people because they're used to being talked to and so they're used to building relationships.* One of the ways these relationships were built was by starting the year without curriculum classes for two or three days and working in the vertical grouping (years 9-13) of whānau programmes. *In Term 1 is all about connections, connecting with the people and the learning and who they are (Alexandra).* Afa reported on a change he saw in his daughter as a result. *First few days when she started school this year she wasn't happy but then she finds herself very interested and she get involved with many things here at the school. I can see she's doing really well.* Sale was also pleased with the changes he saw in his child. *He would be the type of kid who would not say boo in a class but now all of a sudden he's able to speak and interact more with the kids and he's got more friends.* Part of those connections was about the right form of caring:

There was a lot of what we called soft caring, but there's also got to be the hard caring. How's your learning going? And what does that mean for what you're going to be doing? So what does this mean for you when you leave here and how are you pathwaying? It's that. (Alexandra).

A reflection of the school and the relationships formed is the number of returning students who still feel a strong connection with Orua College. Alexandra reported on what one student had said:

Miss, we have to come down and we have to sign in as a visitor. Well we're not actually really a visitor are we? You'll often see them popping around. I think it's just because it's been that connect, and I mean it's other stuff. We've got no fences around this school and so it's open, it's got an open feel to it. ... Even the disconnected ones will come back with their babies. They've got that relationship of a sense of trust and security that somebody believes in them here or somebody can help them. (Alexandra).

Just as important as the relationship was knowing what to do if it was compromised. In Aria's view:

It was just giving them skills to have the conversations around thinking about what they've done. If they've broken something in that relationship, if they've done something to harm that relationship, they actually have the responsibility, but they also need the right, to repair it. If we're at school, if this is a learning institution, then that should be some of the key learning because they have to take it into their lives. (Aria)

Learning Conversations

Building from meaningful relationships were learning conversations which had been an important part of school life since the college's inception. One important aspect of staff learning conversations was above the line and below the line thinking:

Below the line you make excuses and you deny things in terms of, oh, kids are not doing this because they can't, whereas if you're above the line, you're all thinking and you all move forward, and it's ownership, acceptance and responsibility. So we try and ensure conversations are focused on owning, accept and being responsible for the learners here because they're still teenagers. (Alexandra)

The school had come round to the position that it was junior levels that needed strong focus in terms of students' PEP pathways at school and beyond:

Year 9 and 10 is foundation. I don't think it necessarily matters in terms of subjects but it matters in terms of practising to see ahead and learning to learn and make choices and all that sort of stuff, and realise consequences of choices, whether it be a subject you didn't enjoy or you did enjoy. (Ella)

Goal Setting

Goal setting was mentioned by all participants as integral to life at school. For students the nature of the goals set could vary in terms of length and year levels from short to long term. *So we did a term goal for the whole of this term and then we did an end of year goal and then we did a general, you know, where do you want to head? This was with year 10 and 11 (Kelly: Year 1 Learning Leader).* While gaining an achieved, merit, or endorsement in

NCEA credits were included in academically focused goals, other organisational goals such as getting to class on time and behavioural goals, for instance less chat also featured. Goal setting was often a process of negotiation and informal monitoring before assessment. *For example you'd maybe catch up with a couple of kids and say my expectation is that you'll be able to get at least an achieved on this test* (Monique). Though the entire process of checking their goals and the documentation of them in their diaries could be *quite frenetic* (Miriam), the process was viewed as worthwhile:

Well I think it still is part of the culture of [Orua] College. Write your goals for this week. But when you listen to the kids saying, Sir we know what we want to do. Sir, my goal hasn't changed from the start of this year. This is what I want to do. I know this is what I want to do. Yes, and then I've been asked what are the goals to help me get there? Yes, I know these are the five steps I've got to take. (Tai)

Once a pattern of goal-setting was established the ongoing aim was that goals were realistic:

What we need to do now is find a way to make kids more accountable for what they've said they're going to do and to their outcomes. That's not a blame and shame but it's just more, What now? You've said you're going to do this. You didn't meet that, do we need to amend this goal? (Ella).

Self-regulated Learners

Self-regulation developed around goal-setting featured in both parent and staff comments. The focused learning environment of the school was intended to support students' PEP. Tai saw this as part of a culture of developing students into self-regulated learners which required:

conversation around the independent learner, through the independent learning qualities being in their face all the time. What does it mean by persevering in this subject? I think a large number of them have the tools, have the skills, because it's been part and parcel of the culture of their learning here at Orua. (Tai)

Most of the learning leaders felt that year 12 was when students became self-regulated in their learning. Moana was less sure.

[It could] happen at any time for all of them, I've got some year 13s who still don't know what they want to do. I've got some year 12s that know exactly what they're doing. Just don't even get in their way. You just need really resourceful teachers.

Encouraging the students' metacognitive awareness so that that they understood where they were at with their learning and what they could take from it was an important focus for developing self-regulated learners. Tamsin's mother reported on how her junior schooling had shaped this:

Tamsin's done social studies, and it was on Ghandi, the whole project wasn't about Ghandi at all. It was about the research she did, answering, keeping directed to her question, but she did a pod cast thing instead of writing an essay for the end of it. (Deborah)

For Jenny's boys, self-regulation *only started in the later years. They just get on with it (Jenny)*. Keeping Ane's son on task at home often needed follow-up and could present challenges for the development of his self-regulated learning.

I said science is just so fascinating because it's everywhere. It's everything. And once I said that to him, then that's when he said, I enjoyed it today. Because he got the concept of science – air, water, earth, fire, wood, da-de-da. So yeah so he enjoyed that, but sometimes when he has to do essays or I see him sitting there with one line. (Ane)

Alexandra spoke of a difficult student she considered would have been suspended by another school:

We kept working with this kid. I knew he'd got an apprenticeship. He said, oh I've decided I want to get my Level 3 and I said, cool, and how is it going? And he said, well, you know I've got this many credits and so I think I'll get there. But if I don't ... I should get there but it's a bit touch and go. And I thought to myself, I don't care. I do care if he got his Level 3 but it was at that point I thought I don't have to worry about him because he's now taking ownership of his learning. Like the ownership had been transferred from us to him, whereas we battled with him for so long, telling him and doing this and that. But when he said that to me I thought, you're going to be a success, because now you own your learning. So it's about ensuring kids own their pathways.

Reflection

Reflection was a large part of the learning process and student engagement with PEP. Reflection logs were built into the diary system and students were expected to reflect on their work early in their school careers. Ella felt that initially *one of the things we perhaps didn't do well then was teach them how to reflect*. Miriam talked about everyone doing the same structured reflection such as a common reflection sheet and strategies. *Now we're trying to get smarter about making sure that it's consistent and that it's right and that it works (Miriam)*. Consequently there were more structures around reflection which could be formative. *Sometimes if I'm having difficulty with a class, their "do now" might be actually to make a goal for the lesson and then their reflection is to reflect on the goal that they made at the start (Tessa)*. Other times summative reflection was built into formal processes. The quality of the reflections was monitored by the learning leaders. Kelly felt that it had to

be used in the right context. *This is what I did today, but one thing that's helped me learn what we learnt today was this or this strategy'* (Kelly)

Thinking Forward

Getting students to think forward was noted by the whānau leaders, tutors and learning leaders as challenging, but they acknowledged that students looked at their PEP and future aspirations as having possibilities, as opposed to limitations, through their goal setting and reflection. Though learning conversations with the students were the norm, Monique felt that they did not think forward naturally about their PEP. *I think you have to have one-on-one conversations with them, like the HSP, the goal setting with them and their families* (Monique). According to Aria, *while you have to allow your children to dream about what the possibilities are for them, they did not always connect their schooling to actually fulfil that dream, in the best way that they can. But it's really hard because they see it as a job and not as a passion for life or as a pathway for life* (Aria)

Moana reported on an activity in the ILC Centre:

We do this activity where we get them to do a time line, like between before, what led up to now, and where they see themselves in the future. So we'll get all the magazines out, and girls just love going through the bridal magazines and picking out the meringue to wear and the type of car, the type of house, and they'll say this, many times: it's like now degree, wedding straight after or house, then wedding and somewhere in there there's a car and then there's a plane which indicates travel or a globe or something. And yeah, they think that far. I don't know how far forward you want them to think but I've got some that know exactly what they're going to do right up to their mid to late 20s. (Moana)

Summary of Perceived and Intended Purposes of PEP

Overall the students at Orua College were offered a programme which, philosophically, embedded the intent that students would take ownership of their learning and what they wanted to get out of school. Significantly, because foundation staff and parents had from its inception built and shaped a new twenty-first century school, there was opportunity to heighten the students' awareness of themselves as learners through the information, guidance, and academic and career path supports they structured for this purpose. Staff had the luxury of researching and deliberating over a philosophical framework that would inform their aims. Additionally the rebranding of roles, titles and systems and the design of the physical layout of the school signalled an intention to move away from some traditional conventions of New Zealand secondary schools. In this respect the issues in establishing an

effective PEP context for students may not have been as pronounced as in a more established secondary school where initiating change in structures and shifting roles might prove more challenging. Because priority was afforded to embedding Māori kaupapa into the foundational philosophies of the school, a strongly held belief system evolved to which other beliefs could be added. Hence it is probable that while the internal coherence and connectedness of Māori kaupapa held strong philosophical significance and importance for the staff and students, it was also a shared and accepted knowledge base within the majority of the school's parent community.

Taking on board and developing new PEP systems requires not only the support of a school's community but also strong leadership. In the case of Orua College, both principals had been foundation staff members and were passionate about establishing a philosophy to drive learning and educational planning in the school which included particular ongoing support of learners and staff. While it might appear that because they were part of a new school learning leaders did not have to undergo a fundamental shift in their approaches to their work, the reality was that embracing ongoing change could sometimes be a difficult and uncomfortable process. Given that the principal led a constant cycle of inquiry and professional development and learning, it was important that staff were able to safely communicate the reality of their issues. In addition students themselves were prioritised as needing support through building strong relationships and this was reported by the teachers and parents as a central element of Orua College's philosophy. The importance of establishing learning relationships was encouraged and led to learning conversations which were identified as a key feature of PEP. Furthermore the aims of goal setting, reflection, and encouragement to think forward served to develop and influence the notion of the self-regulated learner, an inherent aim within the school's philosophy. While such goals offer a philosophical framework for PEP, without effective processes and procedures they cannot be realised.

The Processes and Procedures Employed to Support PEP

In practice, according to the teachers and parents, PEP was embodied in many forms ranging from expected and traditional structures such as the Careers Centre to new initiatives such as The Independent Learning Centre (ILC). While there was variety in the parents' and teachers' views, the findings suggest that there was consistency in their identification of the types of processes and procedures that contribute to PEP.

Careers

Deliberately situated in the centre of the school where parents could gain easy access, the Careers Centre was staffed with a Career advisor, her assistant and a person to run the Gateway programme. Others also worked out of the centre such as the Pacific Island mentoring teachers group *who pick up Pacific Island kids, and part of their brief is that they take their mentees through the careers room and have the interview* (Aria). Information was on the outside of the windows and the display board inside where *support for learners is about just having up to date information, knowing pathways, having networks, having contacts* (Aria). The model used for students included a research dimension: *What are your strengths and your weaknesses? Who are you? What do you really love to do and how do you find out more about that?* (Aria). Aria referred to a mentor in a previous school who had influenced her thinking about career education:

Careers was not this place that had this little box of resources and a cupboard that you lived in. Careers was linked to every part of the curriculum and had to be a pathway for every student that came through the door at year 9 right through to the time they left. (Aria)

Consequently it was important that the physical environment was welcoming. *It's set up with the ability to have food and things. So kids often come in and have a cup of Milo. It's open at all breaks* (Aria).

Changes in staffing affected the ways in which careers advice was delivered. In the past all tutor groups had gone through the career centre, particularly years 9 and 10, but work pressures of seniors with scholarships, university and tertiary planning had discontinued this practice. As a parent Jenny felt that they needed more encouragement from the Careers Centre to be part of *mapping out futures together*. The previous career advisor had interviewed all year 12 and 13 students and every student *had to register if they were thinking of leaving, had to register where they [thought] they wanted to go* (Aria). The Careers Centre did not work in isolation. An in-zone career kiosk box had moved its way through the whānau blocks. *It was in your face when you went into the whānau block, and you go in and sit on this computer programme and it talks about my careers and I can do that type of stuff* (Alexandra). All of the staff could access a Digital Pathways Development programme in their learning area which was resourced with links to relevant careers. Voluntary PD sessions, focusing on advice about prerequisites for specific careers was also offered and taken up by a few of the staff. A career information evening was held on the same night of the home, school partnership meetings, and was positioned before option

choosing. Ane reported on how these initiatives had influenced his thinking. *That's what I want for my children. We had the MIT [Manukau Institute of Technology] guy, we did the pilot programme which mentors Pasifika students through, takes them through that whole transition.*

On Wednesday afternoons, independent learning time for seniors was targeted specifically for visitors to the school who would provide information on careers. This could include *the best people down the road that take 16 year olds*, which was important for those young people, about whom Ella suggested, *unless you take them by the hand and get them there they just don't go*. Jenny was aware of these meetings but getting her children to attend them was a different matter. *And I do know that on a Wednesday afternoon they do get universities and whatever in, this afternoon to speak to them. And I do ask my older ones whether they go into any of these meetings. But they say no.* (Jenny)

The staff talked about some students not having the confidence to visit the Careers Centre and finding year 12 students who had not visited the centre. Tessa felt that there was *a culture between kids of just like, it's too far out there*, and that many students looked for what information was available through their classes. Primrose found her son's career motivation challenging. *I can ask him, but to get the information from him to say exactly what is it you want to do, it's always, I'm not sure or I don't know*. Jenny had *forced [her] year 13 to go down to careers*. She did not believe they went there *off their own back*. Aria advocated *that every learning leader is a careers teacher. They know what their discipline or their own subject area or their learning area pathways [feed/lead] into. So therefore they are the best people* (Aria). Tessa spoke about her area. *Within science I will quite often talk about different types of research. And a scientist isn't just someone who just does one thing, or just becomes a teacher or whatever* (Tessa). While in Jenny's family: *we go on line and go into the jobs that they want to do and find out what the university needs for them to have*, other students didn't have a 'blueprint' for establishing their educational pathways to the future:

[they] don't know the first thing about finding it out for themselves. Families ... there is no one that has been through university and there's no one that has been into tertiary, there's no one that has worked. So there are all of those issues around that. (Aria)

Moana felt that there were significant job-seeking challenges in the changing employment climate:

Five years ago if a student was going to walk into a retail job at the mall, they could do that, whereas now [Then] you could quite easily walk into a job and get it straight off without too much fuss, but now we've got students who have been applying for job after job and just continually being rejected, and it's hard for them.

The Gateway programme funded by TEC gave learners the opportunity to test their future PEP decisions while also undergoing vocational unit standards through a workplace assessor. Available for 35 students and catering for those planning university study and those wanting other pathways, the focus was on the experience being authentic:

You go and work for a mechanic. You have to actually look at what it's like every day in a workshop. It's not just a one off, [you] usually have a minimum of 10 days out at the workplace and that programme includes you being assessed at some time on a particular vocation. (Aria)

Having a workplace experience could make the students look differently at their academic work at school and clarify or alter their future directions:

A lot of our kids that are into carpentry or are into building, they come back and they realise how important maths really is, and their motivation to finish their maths numeracy increases. Their motivation to finish the school year increases because they've had this look and they realise that that's what they want to do. Or they go to Warehouse and realise, that is definitely not what I want to do, so I have to do this (Aria)

Work placement and courses also exposed students to PEP directions that may not have been previously considered, as noted by one parent. *All his life Junior has wanted to be a chef. They had a careers day or something and now all of a sudden he wants to be an electrician (Afa).* Conversely Deborah reported on the interest of one of her daughters in engineering being reinforced:

So they actually did that work force day. She went out to the airport and went through the engineering there and had a look at that for the day. They did another engineering one in town, and I mean she just came home and said, this is my life, this is where I want to go. That was I think in year 12 she did that. So then she chose her subjects.

For Jenny's daughter, thinking forward started early, [Olivia] who is in year 10 wants to work with animals. On a Wednesday afternoon they used to do a module, and she was doing an animal module. Exposure to careers at school could influence later choices:

We had one boy who last year or the year before went and did embalming, because he wanted to do that. And he did his work experience over the holidays and he was assessed on a particular vocation. I can't remember what the unit standard was for

it. They were absolutely so impressed with him that they gave him a part time job and that's what he's gone in to do training towards. (Aria)

Te Kotahitanga

Underpinning aspects of students' educational pathways was the Te Kotahitanga programme operating in the school. With a team of seven, the aim was to observe colleagues teaching once a term. Despite external funding cuts to the programme the school had persevered in its delivery *because Te Kotahitanga is talked about a lot and is part and parcel of the culture at [Orua] College, it's always there (Tai)*. There was general consensus in the staff that engagement with the Te Kotahitanga programme made them look at their effective teaching profile, and the ways in which academic feedback and feed forward were given to students, in an ongoing way. According to Ella, about 80% of the staff embraced the initiative. Tai acknowledged the hard work of most learning leaders, whether experienced or inexperienced teachers, in implementing their effective teaching profile. Conversely, Miriam felt that the Te Kotahitanga programme was not a big shift for many of the staff; those *who come to this school are the sorts of teachers who do those things naturally*. Many of the staff did, however, comment on their personal growth through participation in the programme as having a flow on effect for their students' PEP. Aria acknowledged this:

But it's about good pedagogy and effective teachers. So it's about effective learning relationships. And of course that's one in the same of whether you're a teacher of maths or you're a teacher who is showing a student how maths is going to help them to pathway them into their future career and how important it can be for their own learning in their daily lives.

At a staff breakfast the principal had made raising Māori achievement a key strategic goal for the staff. This included making Te Kotahitanga central and integral to learning in the school, a response Tai welcomed:

How are we embedding the philosophies of Te Kotahitanga across all the learning areas, across what we do as whānau leaders? And that was always a concern for me, that [Orua] was going down this pathway, and further over here was Te Kotahitanga as an add on. (Tai)

A group of parents embraced this goal through initiating a celebration of Māori achievement.

They set their own criteria and how that was going to be recognised. Then they had quite a formal occasion in the theatre. That was cool because that was tied in

strongly to quite a lot of the threads of our philosophy. So it wasn't like they went off and did something completely different. (Miriam)

Whānau Structure and Leadership

The whānau structure was described by most of the learning leaders as pivotal to the ways in which the educational planning of students was facilitated and supported. For Tai:

My biggest role at [Orua] College is whānau leader. So basically I oversee a fifth of the population of the school from Year 9 to 13. I have a team of 10 whānau tutors who are my primary sort of contact people, even though other staff in the school are allocated to the whānau, right throughout the school (Tai).

Monique explained further. The role was not *day to day anymore with the kids, but more the running of the programme and the developing of the programme*. There was also a fun side to belonging to whānau, through *inter-whānau sports challenges, academic challenges* (Ta). Following up on the average 250 students in each whānau also meant:

Sometimes I'll tag them if there's a group I want to catch up with or I'll go round the whānau. Anything and everything. Learning, behaviour, uniform. Maybe a teacher has put something in KAMAR about not bringing their books, not doing their home learning. (Monique).

It appeared that whānau leaders were instrumental in monitoring links between the students and other areas of educational support available to them in the school.

I make it compulsory for them to make an appointment with our careers people in the first term so that by the time they get to year 11, start of the NCEA level one, they have narrowed their range of choices down to two or three, to make sure is this pathway I am really after. (Tai)

This overview extends to outside of the school.

You get to know the social agencies out there, the courses that are available, the people who deal with 16 year olds who no longer want to be at school. I have a sound understanding of what is out there in the community for that type of student. But also for that student that wants to go towards tertiary, university pathway. (Tai)

Sometimes more follow-up in regard to checking academic planning issues was necessary. Tai spoke of his efforts to support a year 12 student in his whānau group who was facing the impacts of extreme hardships at home on his schooling and later opportunities.

Now he's fluent in Māori but he hated coming here. It's about, the conversations with him and mum about the learning opportunities available at [Orua] College. I don't know how many visits I've done to that house. You go two steps forward, five steps back. And it's just been a slow process. He knows that if he knuckles down that

he can achieve. But the bigger picture is just too much for him at the moment. The big thing for me is when he said, Sir, I know I can achieve at [Orua College]. He knows that he's being monitored, he's being supported, that learning leaders are there. He does target setting things. He is aware of where he is at academically. He is able to take ownership of his learning. And he said to me, I've got to take ownership of that, that's my fault, I should have been in class learning with the rest of them. The thing I also said to mum was, you know, let's say just because he leaves [Orua] College, that doesn't mean that his learning is over. (Tai)

Ultimately the whānau was a place for growing and developing ideas. In Tai's case *whānau have said they want to come in and organise more things*. This resulted in the evening of celebration for Māori students' learning, where the parents organised the whānau hui to a 'full house' leading to the creation of a committee. This opportunity for parent voice and ownership brought a change from the past, where *whānau usually call[ed] in here when there were negative things* (Tai). Changing parental relationships with the school gave opportunity to focus on the PEP of the students' differently:

Whereas the key thing was, instead of us doing the talking [at whānau hui], let them. So what I did, I set it up in the café, just tables with 10 or 12 chairs around and said, I came up with about five or six key questions and that was my talk for the evening. And boom, each table had a staff member as the facilitator of the discussion and their job was just to purely write down. And so the whole evening was ... some simple question, what is Māori achievement? Ask them. What is Māori achievement to them? (Tai)

The Whānau Tutor-Student Partnership

While the whānau leader facilitated aspects of PEP, it was really the whānau tutors who enacted these. The central mechanism of the educational planning for the groups of 25-30 secondary school students was whānau time where practical ways of organising PEP could be addressed. All learning leaders, whānau tutors and students described the 25 minutes of whānau time as the part of the day when important exchanges took place between the tutor and the student. Tai explained:

[My] main request to my whānau tutors is that they have their finger on the pulse with every student within their whānau tutor groups. They need to know where the students and their tutor are at academically, pastoral wise, the behaviour side of things, monitoring of uniform, the whole package. How they're going with their learning. They are the key people who ... what we call the significant adult, who has contact with home. So they're my go to people.

Addressing barriers to a student's PEP often involved contacting the parents which Maia appreciated:

They notice that she was a bit late to this class and it's been a bit of a pattern and they try to talk to her but she just shuts down. Is there anything that we should know that is going on at home that might be able to help us figure her out? (Maia)

Achieving consistency of the 50 whānau tutors' interactions and expertise appeared to be the greatest challenge in providing a coherent system of guidance. *It poses a bit of a problem in possibly huge variation within the capacity of those whānau tutors (Ella).* New teachers to the school reported on the important responsibility of a strong investment in relationships within each whānau group which could be different to that of a learning leader:

It's not just a 25 minute gap, like fly in, fly out the door. And relationships with your learner are important ... make connections with them on a more personal level than perhaps within the science classroom, to make them feel welcomed and that they have a sense of belonging. And I'll keep in contact with home and with them about their studies as well, and other social aspects. (Tessa)

Establishing a meaningful relationship before addressing purely academic and administrative concerns was viewed as a priority:

Oh, you did well in the soccer team or whatever, and then they feel comfortable to be able to speak to you about the learning I think. They feel a bit more, Oh, Miss isn't going to growl if I don't know what to do or anything like that. That's probably how I would have learning conversations really. I'd build that first thing and then launch into the learning. (Kelly)

Ella acknowledged how *the kids value very much the relational aspect with their whānau tutor [who is] always asking about xyz.* She believed the students recognised that tutors cared about where they were headed. However, the vertical mix of both senior and junior students within the tutor group was also important. Kiri noted how whānau tutors could enlist the support of the seniors not only to *act as role models*, but also to *drive all the initiatives within the whānau which would involve the juniors, so they feel part of the whānau.* (Kiri)

With the important relationships, culture and sense of belonging of the whānau established, whānau tutors then needed to focus on organising their students:

What I try and do is allocate time during that whānau tutor [time] to have one on one, if not one on one conferencing just to do certain check points with them. I would do it in small group year levels. Usually during my week structure we have certain days like Monday would be goal setting, Wednesday is where I do NCEA particularly with my seniors and check with their credits and go through it with them. As well as that we have sort of network systems in place through our KAMAR

programme where tutor teachers are alerted to any sort of concerns that the kids may have in particular subject areas (Kiri).

The opportunity to engage in extensive learning conversations around their PEP was reported as extremely positive by the whānau tutors. Jenny reported that her daughter's conversations were ongoing. *I'm not sure which teacher it is. But she's been getting information from her.* Focus was not just about current educational pathways but helping grow awareness of the big picture for students in terms of post-secondary options.

Where do I see myself in five years' time, so in what area am I looking at going? So therefore it comes backwards, you go out there and you map back. So from now this is what I need to do to get there. So that's how I see the role of the tutor teacher, to have those discussions with the learners (Aria).

Whānau time helped establish trust and rapport allowing learning conversations in the peer group to develop:

Especially if you've got a culture within your tutor where if they go back and talk to their friend and they're like, oh how many credits have you got? And they're like, and the other one is like, oh I've got 20. And the one who has got 40 is like, oh bro, you've got to pick it up, rather than the other way around. So it's just making sure that you are encouraging the achievement and creating that culture within the learner environment as well. (Tessa)

Learning conversations and academic counselling discussions around their PEP were tailored to the needs of individual students and improved incrementally. At first it is usually a matter of prompting the students to engage but subsequently students would often take the lead as Tessa noted with one student: *She'll turn around to me and say I've got an assessment that is due, and she'll talk to me about her learning, rather than me asking questions all the time.* Aria noted the flow on effect of raised expectations around learning dialogue throughout the school:

And when you start to hear them having the same conversations that you started, then you know that something is working. Yeah, so that's the interesting thing, and that's why I'm saying the conversations. You can go out there and you talk to kids and they initiate the learning conversation. (Aria)

Data Management

To support learning conversations, whānau tutors were able to access the students' records electronically during whānau time. The system KAMAR, originally set up for careers in the school, was capable of a number of functions and was consequently adjusted to include the logging of learning leader comments, career aspirations, goals and NCEA credits. Ongoing

school modifications and suggestions were possible. *It's got headings already, which aren't quite our headings, so we just type in our own headings* (Miriam). Importantly this meant that students had open and ongoing access to their own data through their whānau tutors and other staff. *It demystifies it all for them*, explained Alexandra. The daily accessibility of whānau tutors' laptops containing current information about progress helped make whānau time a productive experience by enabling them to *see the evidence*. *Look this is what your English teacher said* (Tai).

Running records made by learning leaders at least three times a term added weight to these evidence based whānau discussions. Information about grades, complete and incomplete assessments, home learning and even leaving the class 5 minutes early, also contributed to the students' records which learning leaders had access to as well. Emailing between staff and to parents strengthened communication *where you get the instant messaging and it's easy to be able to keep track* (Kiri). Both whānau teachers and learning leaders viewed contact with home as a critical part of students' PEP. *You've got to have a really good relationship with them and the parents* (Kiri). Maia felt that her daughter's whānau tutor had gone the extra distance around keeping her focused at school. *Oh I love her to pieces. She's helped us lots too with our children, especially our girl, because she's had a hard time*.

Although the students could track their credits on a coloured grid in their whānau booklet, it was the usefulness of having their electronic records available instantaneously that the teachers said they liked. Whānau teachers' approaches varied. For example, Kelly stated that she had *set aside some times in tutor time where [she] says, right, anyone want to see their grades?* Nonetheless, the students own data established an important common foundation for learning conversations around their PEP. In particular their pie graph which gave an instant visual summary of accrued NCEA credits was extremely useful. *They're quite stoked. Oh, they like the pie graphs. They know for example that they've got only 12 out of 16 English credits so they know they need to fill that gap* (Monique). Across the school it was recognised *they do love that page, they love seeing it* (Aria).

Viewing their records was not compulsory, but *when they knew that it was available they wanted it* (Tai). This enthusiasm for viewing their data often meant students continuously going up to the different whānau tutors looking at the screen to see where they were at and what had been logged by a certain learning leader: *And then they'll see something and another conversation starts off* (Aria). By seeing their data the students were able to have a strong insight into the NCEA system and develop clearer understandings of what was

expected of them in their future learning. Many parents were also enthusiastic about viewing their children's data via the parent portal which had just started. Jenny felt that her sons were encouraged in their studies through having access to their data and in terms of her checking results, she said, *I don't think they mind too much*. Hohepa found the range of information available regarding his children helpful:

If you're on the internet of course, again you have to have access. ... You can go straight into their attendance so you can see when they're at school and when they're not at school and you can also go into their results sheet. When you do get year 11 onwards you'll get a copy of every report, you'll get a copy of their record of learning so you see what they've achieved and how they've achieved with merit or excellence or anything like that. But with the year 9s you'll just get their reports which tell you whether they've achieved or not or how well they're doing. (Hohepa)

Whānau tutors varied in their views about which students wanted to see their data – highly motivated, borderline and disengaged students featured in their comments. Most reported that some students did not ask. *Maybe, I don't know if they're ashamed of me seeing it or themselves seeing it, because they know maybe they could have done more*, Kelly pondered.

The significant challenge for the whānau tutor seemed to be the process of constant refinement, *making sure no kid slips through the cracks, and that starts with just coming to school every day* (Ella). Whānau tutors were, however, unanimous in their belief that students' ability to access their data and running records electronically promoted *self-management, responsibility*, and enabled students to *keep on track and know where they're at as well* (Kiri). Managing their data was not always about attainment and could be a wake-up call as sometimes the stark reality of seeing results alerted students to unwise decisions: *selecting a course because of their mate, and when they see the reality of very little credits for six months of work, or non-work, non-engagement* (Tai).

Seeing their data also gave everyone opportunity to consider possible ways forward in what might have been a big unknown picture:

For them, the sort of feeling when I push the button and say come and have a look at this, it's almost like, the first thing they see, 10 credits, they put it in the too hard basket. Why bother, I'm never going to get there. And it's about trying to motivate them to say, hey, it's not just about what we can achieve by the end of this year. The upside of the NCEA, yes it will take you longer to complete, but it's about trying to encourage and motivate them to continue striving to get those credits. (Tai)

Whānau tutors reported on the keen climate of students talking with each other about their NCEA credits, comparing the numbers of NCEA credits they were gaining and the level at

which they were achieving. Because students were so conversant with their data, for the principal who was regularly in the playground, *I now make sure that the conversations when I walk round with kids is say hello and things like that and how's your learning going? What's good about it? Tell me your credits* (Alexandra). This transparent access to data and the students' expectations brought with it pressures on staff. Learning leaders reported the students' management of their results came with certain expectations:

So that puts a bit more pressure on the staff as well because it's like: You haven't put them in Sir and you need to do that Sir. It is great. It's perfectly alright and they've got every right, they've done their learning they should get acknowledged for it, and I suppose they don't necessarily always understand the moderation takes a bit of time. (Alexandra)

This has had flow on effects for staff. *That has forced staff to upskill their own knowledge on helping children* (Ella). Recognising the success of students' data management around their PEP and increased awareness of the school infra-structure, the school was prioritising improvements to their data management systems which had led to the establishment of the parent portal where NCEA results could be accessed from home. This initiative had been supported by Starpath who were working with the school to update information management systems.

Diaries

As well as working in partnership with students on their data, the whānau tutors described diary checking as an important function. One of the early visions of the foundation principal for the school was the way the students used their diaries. Traditional in some schools is the term, 'homework notebook' but Orua College had much broader expectations of students' diary use. Intended as *a way to communicate between home, school and child* (Alexandra) the diary functioned as:

the passport around the school, so when you were mobile learning you'd have your diary in hand to access what you need, resources, you needed around the places. [The original principal had] wanted kids to be reflecting on their learning, not in a narrow way but in a global way as well. Not that 'I learnt how to write a sentence today'. More a bigger picture kind of reflection. (Ella)

From the comments of learning leaders, parents and students, the purpose of the diary appeared to be threefold. Firstly it served expectations of PEP such as the recording of home learning, reflection and goal setting by individual students. Secondly, the 10 independent learning qualities were a focus, where:

a staff member can pick that the child's made wise choices or something or been joyous in their learning so they'll give them what we call a commendation, that's signed off and once they get 20 of those, they cut it out and get a letter home to their parents and it contributes into the whānau points system. (Ella)

The diary was the information source at junior level for this letter, personally signed by the principal and viewed as:

a positive for some kids who are behaviourally in trouble for the parents to see. And we have the junior independent learner of the year which is the kid who's got the most independent learning cards and one of our top awards is the senior independent learner of the year. Staff nominate who they think are the independent learners and it's the second to top cup. There are only three boards downstairs and it's the independent learner, the dux and the student of the year, so we have to encourage that celebration of success. So kids should be able to see and particularly because they're family. Oh, that's my brother or that's my friend. (Alexandra)

Afa reported on his children's engagement including his daughter being incentivised by the awards:

We do have a lot of conversations about studies, all of them, all three of them, the 13 year, and every time I get a text or a letter that the school is telling me she's doing really well, she came home: Did you get a letter? (Afa)

Finally the diary served a practical purpose so that if the students left class for any reason such as going to the nurse, it was signed on the communications page. There was also a library page where students were signed in and out, and information about whether the students had their independent learning provisional or full licence which gave permission for senior students to seek academic help or study independently.

Staff reported senior students (years 12-13) as less enthusiastic about diary use. *Some of them don't use it at all because they're just organised and they don't like writing down stuff. That's the dilemma I kind of have with forcing everybody to do it the same way (Ella)*, while Kelly had seen some that were completely blank.

NCEA and Subject Choosing

Subject choosing lay initially with student and parents, where a paper booklet was sent home with the requirement that the parents sign off the choices for their child. There was an expectation that *the tutor teachers know kind of where that child wants to go in terms of career or university, and I just spreadsheet their subjects (Monique)*. The timetable was organised so that there was as much choice as possible. As Alexandra noted, *we didn't see*

the need to close kids' options down early, like at 15. Why should you know what you want to be because a lot of the time you actually don't.

At times student choices needed to be tracked, monitored and accommodated by school personnel:

I can think of a girl called April who was in year 13 last year. Partway through the year decided she wanted to go to university so was scrambling round.[She] had a connection with the art teacher fortunately so moved into photography and got on board together and got another approved subject and got enough credits in it to get into university. (Monique)

Whānau leaders were strong advocates for students, especially when it came to post-school options and communicating with prospective employers:

Give them a call, look, here's the situation, Joe Bloggs is 15 credits away from nailing level two. I want to try and hold on to him or her until those 15, and then boom, can we get him or her into your electrician apprenticeship? So those conversations. (Tai)

Ensuring pre-requisites were chosen wisely was often commented on by staff. Learning leaders needed to have ongoing conversations in their subject areas about requirements, as students often neglected to staircase their subject choices. Staff also talked about a *need to keep upskilling whānau tutors so that they can take more of a role* (Miriam). Tessa felt this was an area that needed constant focus, *'not just like you need this amount of credits, but in terms of looking at universities, what should learners be looking at in terms of credits within subject areas?* Tessa felt *it would be great in some ways to have more liaison going on between careers and tutor teachers*. Miriam contended that whānau tutors could become immersed in administrative matters around PEP issues where *their role is just to make sure the things are filled in and sign it and give it to the whānau leader*, so there needed to be support for the whānau tutors.

Despite the whānau tutors *sitting with [students] and going through their subject selections and checking their credits and seeing whether they meet the pre-entry requirements to get into that course* (Kiri) sometimes students could slip through the net. *You do find mistakes are made where a kid ends up in year 12 physics ... and you look back and you find out they didn't do year 11 science, so they can't do year 12 physics* (Miriam). Tai reported on a situation that had been a wake-up call for all of the staff where the system had allowed a student to leave school needing only one or two further credits to complete Level 1:

And basically the school system says, well good, away you go, signed it all out. And then on the Monday Alexandra picked up on it. And she didn't have a rant and a rave, she just said we need to be aware of this. Why wasn't this student made to do one more assessment, to finish level 1? The student wasn't a behavioural problem, they just wanted out. (Tai)

Generally the staff felt that in terms of subject choosing there was *quite a bit of ownership on the student* (Tessa). Wiremu commented on the teachers' openness to progress his child's PEP. *Just even meetings that are available for the parents. They never stop trying, and once the child sees the parent involved then the child realises, my mum and dad do care about my future.* In particular with the systems they had in place there was a feeling among the learning leaders and whānau tutors that students had more understanding around how subject choices affected entrance into university and career paths *now more than ever, with HSP, with the tutors* (Aria).

Home School Partnerships (HSP)

A key component of the students' PEP was the home school partnership meetings which had replaced the traditional parent-teacher interview. Breaking cycles in parent responses to and engagement with secondary schools was a key dimension of the HSP because *unfortunately a lot of parents from low decile families didn't have positive school experiences, don't have formal education themselves and so can sometimes see high schools like brick walls* (Alexandra). All staff talked about the value of *an ideal opportunity for them to come and play an active role in that sort of subject selection and looking at and understanding the prerequisites* (Kiri). Rochai felt that although as a parent she had taught her children to be future focused, there was much more *awareness* about her daughter's PEP since the HSP structure had been instigated and it was *essential especially for parents who otherwise wouldn't have much knowledge of school systems*. Rochai found it *easy to approach teachers* and felt it was important everyone was *on the same page*.

The parents, whānau tutors and students met at the beginning and at incremental stages throughout the year. Meeting with just one staff member meant that *it becomes a significant person who passes on that information* (Alexandra). All information about the student was available which consisted of attendance, ongoing records of learning, outcomes achieved and learning leaders' running records, which were compiled on the data management system for the whānau tutors to share. Interviews between the student and whānau tutor were also recorded. Sometimes the whānau tutor would recommend that the family meet with career personnel who were available.

The whānau tutors reported on the HSP partnership as having an effective impact on progressing the students' PEP. *During those times, they've got your full attention, they've also got their parents full attention you hope too* (Miriam). The proposition of seeing a large number of different teachers and assimilating all that information was not viewed as the best solution to students' PEP. Jenny preferred the new system compared to the secondary school her children had previously attended. *We didn't have a home school partnership, not like they do here. We saw each one [teacher]. It used to take all night.* While it was acknowledged that a small percentage of parents still liked a meeting with the traditional subject teacher, which was still encouraged via email or meeting, there was enthusiastic support for the new arrangement, an initiative that had been trialled and led by a large co-educational school in west Auckland. The HSP interviews had instant impact:

Well we went from having say 20-30% attendance on a subject report night to 80%. Basically we just designed a system where we invited parents to come in with an appointment, set them an appointment time which they could change, on a particular day and we also got the whānau tutor to phone them individually to try and make it personal, and yeah, we were pretty overwhelmed with the response. We devised a letter for them to give to their employer and we tried to make it flexible and staff were amazing on that because some of them were having the interviews at half past seven in the morning, some were having it at six o'clock at night, so you know, the staff were fantastic. ... This is not a negative conversation, this is about helping your child to get somewhere, be the best that they can. (Ella)

For some of the newer teachers, phoning the parents could be initially daunting. *The first time I was petrified. Well the school was really good because they gave us an outline of how to approach [parents] and what sort of things to say* (Tessa). Rescheduling was often necessary. Phoning had the greatest impact on the attendance of Māori parents. Tai contacted a Hamilton school to find out how they had increased the way Māori parents came to school to discuss their children's PEP and discovered it was phoning parents and explaining *this is how we operate, we want you to come into school, we want you to be part of your son or daughter's learning.* He described a key focus of the HSP appreciated by parents was future goals. *What is it that you want to do? What is it that you need to do to get you there?* (Tai).

The HSP is the interface of the parents, school personnel and students:

It's made huge leaps and bounds, especially with family having a greater input and they're able to support us as teachers from the home. And so the barrier that they may have to coming into school is broken. So they're much more comfortable,

they've got a person that they know they'll form a relationship with – the tutor teacher – and the communication lines are well open. (Moana)

Maia was impressed with the emphasis Orua College gave to PEP compared to other schools:

The home school partnership there is expectations of parents, to do with the children and their learning, as well as the parents' expectations of the teachers. And it's constant engagement between the parents and the teachers. I find that really good because I have a lot of work colleagues who have children the same age as myself, little things that Orua College did. Like once a term or twice a term we would get updated with the credits that that child was gaining in level one. I learnt very early that not all schools are like that.

Collective goal setting was recorded by the whānau tutor on a template. Along with other functions of the interview, this was a further objective of the HSP meeting and involved in-depth negotiation:

We had an academic goal, a personal goal and a self-management goal we called it. And with seniors we found it was quite easy for them to set a goal because it generally related to NCEA or maybe a favourite subject that they were aiming for. But then we found some of them, it was hard to wreck their aspirations as opposed to getting them to set a realistic goal. (Ella)

Having a more authentic conversation than the traditional parent interview could sometimes expose conflicts, *for instance a parent might want their child to be a lawyer and the child wanted to be a dancer, and we found just a few; it actually caused a bit of family conflict (Ella)*. Alexandra spoke of how the HSP interview process had opened up effective communication with a parent who had questioned her daughter's preferred career choice.

She wants to be an architect. I don't know why she wants to be an architect because we're all accountants and we could help her at home with accountancy and stuff like that and we don't know anything about architecture. But I've had this meeting and I know that now she's got the support that she needs. (Alexandra)

The HSP meetings facilitated permanent communication channels and without exception the whānau tutors and learning leaders reported on the benefits of ongoing dialogue via email or meetings. Communication became easier over the years as familiarity developed:

There's a much more kind of like mutual relationship going on rather than just them feeling like the teacher just rings whenever such and such is in trouble. So now I have fairly frequent emails going backwards and forwards between me and learning leaders and home in regards to what those kids could be doing at home to support

their learning or what families could be doing, or you know, just simple things like that. (Tessa)

The HSP was a catalyst in providing ‘*the picture of the student*’ (Kiri), but input from the parents and ownership of that picture by the student was an objective. *So it’s about how much ownership, how much do you guide the child because you want student ownership of it. You want the parents to have a voice* (Ella). This ongoing working partnership for the students addressed barriers along the way.

There’s one who just gets into a lot of trouble. She’s got a brain on her shoulders, but it’s just constant. There is not day goes by that I don’t receive an email about her. And it’s from all her teachers (Wiremu).

The whānau tutors talked about the in depth and honest conversations generated because they, the parents and students were able to focus on and unpack relevant issues. Individual students were frequently referred to as benefiting from the collective energy and honesty of the HSP especially around goal setting, reaching those goals and putting plans in place. Kiri reported on how the HSP supported one of her students in taking greater agency over her learning ... *so it’s been huge strides I guess we’ve made with her* (Kiri). Taking a longer time also had advantages for parents who found it difficult to communicate readily with the school.

A girl who has been in my whānau for five years and her parents had never been into the school because they spoke Cambodian and didn’t speak English at all. And finally in her year 13 year she brought her mum in and it was lovely to meet her. Because prior to that you just rang. If you wanted to ring about Sophie, you rang Sophie. Sophie can you tell your parents that (Miriam)

The HSP also uncovered aspects of the students’ progress around their PEP which could be challenging:

Sometimes I don’t think they like being held accountable for the decisions they’re making. But I think it’s good for them. And I think it’s good for me as a learning leader. And I think it’s also really good for the parent to actually see their child making decisions. And actually doing some processing on their own two feet. Because sometimes you’ll have parents come in and they’re like, wow I didn’t even realise that Johnny was thinking about that pathway, or that that pathway even existed (Tessa)

For those parents and caregivers who could not make HSP meetings, home visits were sometimes an option they could choose to take. At the same time it was recognised that *not everyone is comfortable so we don’t insist on that for everyone, but it’s really worked, and*

then sometimes from that the parent has started to come in (Ella). The HSP meeting also helped to developed more organisational synergy for the whānau tutors. As Monique explained, the HSP process has probably just given them a more concrete structure to follow. Many staff felt they needed more whānau time, and more one-on-one with the students. Kiri felt it was important to allocate more time to spend with those senior students, while Kelly clarified her preference. More time but not time when everyone else is in the classroom, not the HSP but just you and the student (Kelly).

Independent Learning Centre (ILC)

The scaffolding through junior school regarding student's future ambitions was focused on student awareness and eventual ownership of their PEP journeys. It could begin with modest aspirations, where in one activity the students made passports:

They cut out a picture of themselves, have a little bit about their family, what they want to achieve this year. What they want to do or be, what their bucket list is, the things they want to do or achieve before they die ... skydiving or jumping off the Sky Tower or going to like Spain and eating a fancy meal or something like that. ... because it has to be authentic. (Moana)

The ILC was set up specifically for developing the independent learning skills of seniors for university and the workforce. It consisted of a semi-open space equivalent of two classrooms with a further room for ICT set up with the software that learners used in their senior classes. Specialist ILC tutors worked with the students. The ILC had a strong philosophy. *How do you allow kids to learn and explore things if a teacher always dictates what they do? (Alexandra).* Also linked to the ILC were two independent learning classes in years 12 and 13 consisting of 'top stream' students. At the ILC these students worked on assigned extra learning tasks and with junior students, on group assignment work and community based learning that could not be accommodated into normal class time. For Primrose, the ILC was also a good model for activities at home, *balancing their time for their homework and chores and piano practicing and stuff.* All the same, keeping their children on track was a challenge a number of parents conveyed, typically explained by Ane. *I've only got boys so I don't know, I'm always on them. But if I don't say homework, I tell you they won't do it.*

Essentially the ILC was focused on scaffolding the students to take ownership of their PEP and learning. For Monique, it was *part of the package that helps develop our independent learners. Because normally you wait till university to develop those skills and then maybe*

it's too late. Not just in managing their own time but also getting them to think for themselves in terms of developing content and ideas about the content. Although some students arrived at the school with these skills, others did not.

Not all kids are independent. Sometimes the bright kids are the ones that actually just need a little spoon feeding and it's often some other kids that have got those self-management skills. So we just have to try and ensure that we scaffold it successfully, which is where 100 minute lessons come in as well. (Alexandra)

The programme also delivered unit standards:

We've got different ones. So we've got Work and Study Skills, Planning and they're from an organisation called Instant Standards. So this one is called Produce a Plan for Your Own Future Directions. We've got the Time Management one. We've got Left Brain, Right Brain Cognition. (Moana)

Students also gained their provisional and full independent learning licenses through the ILC and completing their unit standard on time management was a means of doing this. Through gaining their provisional license (documented in their diaries) permission to seek help from different learning leaders or to access the library or computer labs during ILC time was granted. Parents commented on this arrangement as particularly helpful. The license, monitored by staff in the ILC, could be revoked at any time *until they have kind of regained that trust or caught up on the learning that they've missed out on* (Moana). Without a license it was only possible to leave the centre for 10-15 minutes to seek help from the learning leader for assessment purposes or documentation which had to be kept in classes.

Learning leaders were supportive of having senior students drop into their classes and encouraged this when they could, although sometimes it wasn't possible:

I had two boys show up last week, but I was in the middle of a practical with my year nines and I just turned around and said no, this is not good timing, I can't focus on you and watch 28 kids with a Bunsen burner, it's not going to happen. But they're normally pretty good about it because they understand that that's their time. (Tessa)

There was a generous dimension to the lengths the learning leaders went to, but it was all viewed as advantageous to the students' engagement with their learning. Tessa found it useful to get her senior chemistry students to note her non-contact times in their diaries at the start of the year so that *if they see I'm not teaching they can just come down and get some one on one.*

The full license entitled the students to study at home during ILC time if they wished. Ella explained that 70 of our year 12s, so that's say 40%, maybe have got that full licence, and depending on where they live and what things they've got at home, they'll decide to work at school or not. Alexandra rationalised this:

They've got all sorts of stuff going on and they're nocturnal creatures, lots of them as well and some of them want to wake up at 10 o'clock or they need to wake up at 10 o'clock so we said they don't have to be at school but they have to demonstrate that they've got these qualities. (Alexandra)

Rochai felt that her daughter had become a more efficient learner through working on her goals at home with her full ILC license, but Jenny's son made another decision about the most effective place to work. *This is not me, I haven't said to them you must stay at school and you must do this. They've taken it upon themselves to spend Wednesday afternoon staying at school and doing whatever they need to do (Jenny).*

There was ongoing diagnosis of students' personal interests and the way they could be scaffolded into career options including some *they might not necessarily have thought of yet* (Moana). Alexandra also talked about the complimentary interface of ILC with other aspects of students' PEP. *We're now bringing in kids' self-reflection into the report process. Kath at the independent learning centre has always had kids write down how they view themselves, where they are on the continuum (Alexandra).* Importance was placed on monitoring the students' engagement with their academic studies through the ILC which added another level of support to that of their learning leaders:

Often if we do have a student who doesn't come in regularly with anything I will email all of his teachers as learning leaders to provide me with anything that he or she is behind in and they will just give me a comprehensive list. I always put together a folder. What are you working on today, because Miss says this and Sir wants you up to here. There's the options, you've got the choice. (Moana)

Moana explained that the nature of the ILC structure meant it was possible to know something of the student's homelife if they chose to share it. Tutors varied in their approach, she said, knowing when to intervene and when *not to interrupt them if they're really super focused*. This was not always straightforward as there were *certain students who just have a reluctance to engage and often it's not their fault* (Moana). Her objective was that a student's relationship with learning would become strong enough to minimise the impact if a staff member with whom he or she had a close relationship were to leave the school.

Learning leaders commented on the structure and expectations built into ILC, compared to non-contact periods they had experienced in some other schools which had ended up being student free time. Moana felt that the independent qualities gained by Orua College students from the ILC philosophy had given the students benefits long after their schooling had been completed:

Students who go on to university or further study, they're a lot more capable at that level with their downtimes. Am I going to go to the mall or am I going to the movies? Do I have time to shoot into Shadows and have a few pints? But they'll be like, okay, I've got this much space between each class, I'll go to the library and work on this one for this long. They're a lot more able to cope with the freedom, not having someone on their back is going to cause and so we've had lots of feedback from students who've left, who've come back. Miss thanks to you guys, if we didn't have this, my peers that I'm trying to hang out really don't know what to do.

3D Episodes/Modules

Both students and staff referred to the 3D episode choices as offering a good grounding for personalised learning. The opportunity for getting to know the students was also viewed as a helpful dimension for whānau leaders *to spend three solid days with the cohort of students that I was overseeing, yeah I think that was one of the best ways to really come on board and get to know them* (Tai). The idea for the modules are two-fold. Aria explains:

[They are] a wananga experience. That's how Māori do it. You stop whatever you're doing, you go into the bush and you stay there until you've done the learning with experts and then you come out and you are able to pass it on.

They also have a strong research base. Fifteen staff had volunteered to have a think tank based on a Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) project that first started with the 100 minute lessons, then shifted to the 3D episodes where it was felt that, through a co-constructive focus, transformational learning was taking place:

Kids go through a process of selecting what's their passion and are they going to work on their own or are they going to work with a group and what teachers will be able to help them, what resources will they need, what outcome? (Miriam)

Possible topics are extensive, aiming to extend students' horizons through one-on-one conversations.

One of my boys, he decided, he did a whole lot of surveys and engineering kept coming up and so I said you should look at the University of Canterbury. He's only Year 9 and then he goes, where's Canterbury? (Monique).

3D episodes could be a trigger but did not necessarily reach all of the students:

I've just done a careers based three day episode where they had to look ahead 10 years for example, and how do they see their life when they're 24/25? It was mainly Year 10 and 11 and one kid was just disengaged. He was just put in my episode because he was roaming. He just couldn't do it. He just didn't know, whereas the others all had a vision. But I wonder if that's because his life is so crap at the moment. I imagine if you're the only one who's going to school in the morning, no-one's got a job or whatever, man how hard is it to look bigger than that if that's your world? Monique

Summary of Processes and Procedures Employed to Support PEP

From the reported comments of the teachers and parents, it appears that there were substantive links between the espoused philosophy of Orua College and the processes and procedures generated to support this philosophy. An holistic approach to embedding PEP as part of the mission and goals of the school was apparent. This was exemplified in the tracking of individual students around their learning and planning throughout school and beyond. The school's programme of guidance, academic and career path support required systems that could on the one hand develop the salient goal, independence in learners, and on the other greater dependence on parents and caregivers to work together to realise that goal.

The procedures employed by the school to support such aims ranged from modifying traditional structures such as the Career Centre to finding new ways of enhancing communication with both students and parents. The introduction of the ILC and the implementation of 3D modules and episodes involved processes that were not built upon existing structures. Sometimes fundamental change to current systems was required, such as incorporating new functions for the diary or restructuring the outmoded parent/teacher interview into an effective HSP. Such communication networks within the school and between home and school were deemed to be catalysts in enhancing and understanding students' PEP.

From the teachers' reported comments, other ongoing formal practices such as subject choosing for NCEA appeared to be closely scaffolded, with students taking an active role in the learning conversations that occurred. The teachers and parents believed that these conversations allowed students a degree of ownership, demonstrated for example by their enthusiasm for continuing access and agency in the management of their own data. Such processes also required all the teachers to have good levels of skills in working with the

data. There was general consensus that students had their own academic discussions as a result of this network of PEP processes.

Informing this network was a shared understanding of the kaupapa of the school and threaded through this kaupapa were the active practices of Te Kotahitanga. Whānau time was identified by the teachers as a critical interface for PEP processes and was also reflective of the place where a student would be known personally, cared for and tracked consistently by one tutor in regular communication with parents and caregivers for up to five years throughout their school career. Accordingly, the whānau structure allowed a safe entry for parents to be involved in their children's learning and PEP. Essentially whānau time was not just a place where the roll was taken. It was deliberately structured to discover and understand how the various elements of a student's PEP fitted together. Here students could familiarise themselves with the number of academic pathways open to them while also having their awareness raised of the importance of selecting appropriate pre-requisites. Alerting the students to the need to make the right subject choices at school and achieve the qualifications necessary for tertiary study or a career of their choice was a shared responsibility. Whānau time involved students being asked to set goals and discuss with their whānau tutor what they needed to do to reach them. The HSP interview ensured that input was collaborative. Parents commented on the importance of active rather than passive inclusion because they often had ongoing communication with their children's teachers. Information could be referred back to the learning leader if not directly from their whānau tutor then through further support services available such as careers. Through working with students, particularly seniors, whānau leaders, tutors, parents and caregivers found mechanisms to make students' introduction to their educational planning journeys less daunting. Both teachers and parents believed that student ownership of data was important, and this was helped by access to the parent portal and communication networks established. How effective or consistent that information and process was for the student depended largely on the whānau tutors and learning leaders.

Chapter Summary

It has been well documented that teachers are central to the success of reform in schools (Hattie, 2009). In the case of Orua College, willingness to take up new approaches and techniques for students' educational planning at school and beyond and enact these in ways consistent with the philosophies underpinning them was a valuable attribute of the learning leaders and whānau tutors. It is likely that deep seated beliefs did not have to be challenged

or disestablished as they might in a more established environment, as foundation staff and those who followed were able to develop a shared vision and engage from a platform embracing and reflecting changes in the secondary school environment. The teachers in this study commented on the importance of understanding the intentions behind the uptake of new strategies and approaches promoted through the school's philosophy. There appeared to be a strong connection between teachers' attitudes towards students' developing responsibility for their PEP, and their own receptiveness to new ideas, willingness to experiment with new methods and implement new practices. In this respect it was not a matter of the teachers' tacit adoption of practical aspects of a particular innovation, but a cognisance of the whole picture of PEP for their students. The critical issue was therefore, the way the teachers made sense of their changing roles and responsibilities and how much they then, included parents in this process.

Particular attention has been paid to the high value the school assigned to the need for learners to be active and independent and the expectation that teachers would promote student agency and autonomy in their learning and management of their PEP. Determining what constitutes effective implementation of PEP however, and how it influences students' interpretation, management and enactment of their educational planning requires the voices of the students.

The Next Chapter

In Chapter Seven interview responses from the twenty-seven students are examined to search for patterns in student experiences and perceptions of PEP. This chapter then highlights similarities and differences in students' articulations about PEP and compares these to teachers' and parents' views. Finally the impact of PEP on the students is investigated.

CHAPTER SIX:

Experiencing the Inner Workings

As a process for enhancing pathways at school and beyond PEP at Orua College appears to show particular promise. This position is founded on the comments made by parents and teachers in the previous chapter who identified perceived and intended purposes of personal educational planning at Orua College and outlined the processes and procedures they felt supported these intentions. The perceptions of 27 senior secondary school students, identified as either engaged, semi-engaged or disengaged with their PEP, is the subject of this chapter. In presenting students' self-reported experiences of PEP there is an expectation that the range of processes that support PEP can be examined in more depth and the impact of PEP on the students more closely understood.

In selecting students representing different levels of engagement, teacher confirmation was sought. In Phase One of the research, form teachers were asked to complete the Student Engagement Sheet that helped identify students in the three categories. From the senior student body three identified groups of students were established from survey categories which were considered by the researcher to be critical. These categories included belief in achievement at expected academic subject levels, persistence with challenges, having clear goals at school and beyond, meeting deadlines, attending, and driving learning. This chapter first provides a descriptive overview from the survey. Tables 5, 6, and 7 set out the findings for years 11, 12 and 13, the target group of 509 students for the current research. The results of the survey serve a two-fold purpose. They provide an initial overview for the student context of the study related to important aspects of PEP and secondly, as a sampling tool, they reveal patterns for the identification of the students as engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged.

The chapter then presents student interview data about their experiences of PEP under three key themes. The first examines their thoughts about the various initiatives that have been developed for the students at the school to support their PEP. The second identifies how they perceive themselves as possessors of knowledge relating to PEP, and the third presents their perceptions of how PEP has impacted on their educational experiences. Following presentation of the data relating to each theme, an analysis of differences between the perceptions of the engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged students is presented.

Table 5. Year 11 – Student engagement data sheet (Collation: *n*=212)

Criteria 1:	Of the time	Ethnicity				
		European (<i>n</i> =44)	Pasifika (<i>n</i> =39)	Māori (<i>n</i> =74)	Asian (<i>n</i> =14)	Other (<i>n</i> =41)
I believe that I can achieve in my subjects	All	48%	38%	39%	57%	49%
	Some	52%	62%	61%	43%	51%
	Never					
Criteria 2:		Ethnicity				
I persist in academic studies when faced with challenges		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	39%	16%	26%	43%	37%
	Some	59%	79%	71%	57%	63%
Never	2%	5%	3%			
Criteria 3:		Ethnicity				
I meet deadlines		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	25%	18%	20%	71%	34%
	Some	75%	82%	77%	29%	60%
Never			3%		6%	
Criteria 4:		Ethnicity				
I drive my own learning		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	23%	36%	38%	50%	41%
	Some	77%	59%	58%	50%	59%
Never		5%	4%			
Criteria 5:		Ethnicity				
I attend classes regularly		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	86%	38%	64%	79%	90%
	Some	14%	57%	35%	21%	10%
Never		5%	1%			
Criteria 6:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for studies at school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very	59%	72%	54%	79%	73%
	Not	36%	21%	46%	21%	27%
Unclear	5%	7%				
Criteria 7:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for what I will do when I leave school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very clear	52%	31%	54%	57%	66%
	Not clear	41%	67%	43%	43%	29%
Unclear	7%	2%	3%		5%	

Table 6. Year 12 – Student engagement data sheet (Collation: 170 Responses as a Percentage)

Criteria 1:	Of the time	Ethnicity				
		European (n=42)	Pasifika (n=31)	Māori (n=45)	Asian (n=24)	Other (n=28)
I believe that I can achieve in my subjects	All	57%	42%	33%	67%	43%
	Some	43%	58%	67%	33%	57%
	Never					
Criteria 2:		Ethnicity				
I persist in academic studies when faced with challenges		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	29%	26%	15%	46%	32%
	Some	69%	71%	78%	54%	64%
Never	2%	3%	7%		4%	
Criteria 3:		Ethnicity				
I meet deadlines		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	40%	29%	11%	54%	43%
	Some	60%	71%	78%	46%	57%
Never			11%			
Criteria 4:		Ethnicity				
I drive my own learning		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	48%	35%	31%	67%	71%
	Some	52%	62%	60%	33%	29%
Never		3%	9%			
Criteria 5:		Ethnicity				
I attend classes regularly		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	93%	71%	71%	83%	79%
	Some	7%	29%	29%	17%	21%
Never						
Criteria 6:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for studies at school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very	55%	68%	40%	75%	68%
	Not	45%	29%	56%	25%	32%
Unclear		3%	4%			
Criteria 7:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for what I will do when I leave school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very clear	60%	49%	40%	67%	71%
	Not clear	33%	35%	47%	33%	25%
Unclear	7%	16%	13%		4%	

Table 7. Year 13 – Student engagement data sheet (Collation: 127 Responses as a Percentage)

Criteria 1:	Of the time	Ethnicity				
		European (n=29)	Pasifika (n=33)	Māori (n=20)	Asian (n=28)	Other (n=17)
I believe that I can achieve in my subjects	All	64%	34%	35%	50%	59%
	Some	34%	66%	65%	46%	41%
	Never				4%	
Criteria 2:		Ethnicity				
I persist in academic studies when faced with challenges		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	38%	21%	25%	36%	53%
	Some	62%	76%	70%	60%	47%
	Never		3%	5%	4%	
Criteria 3:		Ethnicity				
I meet deadlines		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	72%	21%	20%	50%	47%
	Some	28%	70%	80%	46%	53%
	Never		9%		4%	
Criteria 4:		Ethnicity				
I drive my own learning		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	48%	36%	45%	50%	35%
	Some	52%	61%	55%	46%	65%
	Never		3%		4%	
Criteria 5:		Ethnicity				
I attend classes regularly		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	All	93%	70%	70%	92%	88%
	Some	3.5%	30%	30%	4%	12%
	Never	3.5%			4%	
Criteria 6:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for studies at school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very Clear	93%	54%	50%	86%	82%
	Not Clear	7%	40%	45%	10%	18%
	Unclear		6%	5%	4%	
Criteria 7:		Ethnicity				
I have clear goals for what I will do when I leave school		European	Pasifika	Māori	Asian	Other
	Very Clear	55%	43%	55%	57%	76%
	Not Clear	34%	48%	35%	39%	18%
	Unclear	11%	9%	10%	4%	6%

The above Tables indicate that the student participants perceived the programme as impacting in a consistent fashion across the seven criteria. That is, that if a participant reported a relatively positive impact on one dimension, they were then likely to report positive impacts on all dimensions. Conversely a participant reporting a relatively negative impact on one dimension was likely to report a relatively negative impact on all dimensions. There is significant change in criteria (6) (clear goals at school) for Pakeha students from years 11 to 13 from 59%-93% (very clear) although the other groups do not show this development. Despite this improvement, similar to other groups, Pakeha students do not rate criteria (7) (clear goals beyond school) highly. Pasifika and Māori groups do not show a lot of change in criteria (1) (their belief in achieving in their subjects) between years 11 and 13. There is a close association between this criteria (1) and criteria (4) ‘believing’ and ‘driving’

learning. Criteria (2) (persists when faced with challenges) is overall the lowest scoring area for all students. The reader is advised that while these are relative affective impacts that are intended to inform the research context, it is the semi-structured interviews employed in both phases of the data collection that are intended to elicit rich detail in conjunction with the surveys.

It was the overall pattern of responses to the survey categories from the whānau leaders and tutor teachers that determined the consequent placement of the students into the three groups, with the qualifiers being high, average or low. These teachers had a picture of the students based on input from each of the individual student's teachers. Thus collectively these established groups reflected the salient characteristics of engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged students. For example, to be placed in the group referred to as engaged, the active role of the students in all of the criteria above were classified as high. The students also responded to the same survey criteria as their teachers and while their selections provide an interesting interface, it was their teachers who ultimately decided their placement.

As a result three groups of students, engaged, semi-engaged and disengaged, were identified and established. The groups of nine students made up the twenty seven interviewed consisting of disengaged students (Felicia, Rima, Viliami, Ranui, Roimata, Waka, Sonny, Ula, Rewi), semi-engaged students (Pita, Malu, Ripeka, Mereana, Rafik, Fernandez, Keta, Eliza, Pule) and students who were identified as engaged (Tamsin, Lilena, Raj, Metiria, Ra, Vika, Rawiri, Jack, Pia). In combing the data, similarities within each group of students were revealed in regard to the students' experiences of the processes and procedures employed by the school to support PEP. Additionally the responses of the twenty seven students drawn from the survey were compared with those of their whānau leaders and tutors. Table 8 indicates the degree of match and mismatch between the student and teacher responses.

Table 8. Percentage of match for student and teacher responses

Criteria	Engaged	Semi-engaged	Disengaged
1	67	100	89
2	56	100	89
3	67	89	100
4	67	78	89
5	100	78	89
6	89	67	22
7	67	33	22

The findings highlight a mismatch of understanding between what disengaged students and their teachers perceive as having ‘clear goals at school’ (criteria 6) as well as ‘clear goals for when they leave school’. There is a similar mismatch in perceptions of semi-engaged students and their whānau tutors in terms of having ‘clear goals at school’ (criteria 6). Other indicators for the criteria are relatively consistent for all students and their teachers’ responses. The exception is criteria (2) ‘persistence’ for engaged students where there is less consistency in the students’ and teachers’ responses.

Differences were also apparent within and between the groups, particularly in the ways PEP impacted on students. These similarities and differences are addressed in some depth in this chapter. The following descriptions and explanations from the students about their learning and qualification pathways at school and beyond charts the field in which PEP operates.

Students’ Experiences of Processes and Procedures to Support PEP

All students endeavoured to respond to their PEP experiences by describing their approaches and practices. There were however considerable differences in terms of how their responses were framed and conveyed when it came to choosing their NCEA subjects and experiencing their home and school partnerships with their tutors, parents and caregivers. The overall pattern of how the students availed themselves of established PEP systems such as the school diary and ILC also varied.

Choosing of NCEA Subjects

Choosing subjects is important for every occupation and endeavour, not merely for traditional academic study. Whether focusing on academic preparation for tertiary study and eventual decisions on what degree to complete or seeking out a career, subject choosing is immersed with searching for a purpose or a direction.

Disengaged Students

The idea that subject-choosing at senior level should be informed by and allow opportunity for staircasing was a relative challenge for the disengaged students. They reported dependence at senior level on their tutor teachers for advice and guidance. Where previously they had sought general advice they became aware of the need to be involved in specific course choices and understood that their subsequent progress would be monitored. *Every class we have with her [tutor teacher], yeah, like how is it going throughout my subjects and stuff. Because I really like sports and I chose PE, and the teacher helped me pick them (Felicia). Rima gained support from: my tutor teacher, the careers office or my mum. Nearly every day really. Mainly year 13s, just to get them on track for next year. Get them on courses or Uni maybe.*

Waka was the only one who did not appreciate his tutor's advice. *I just sit down and wait for the bell to ring to go to class.* However he confided in two of his learning leaders instead:

There's two that are my best. Miss C and Mr S. Mr S is my agribusiness teacher. Yeah, they're like my closest things. Well, I talk to them like friends more, not like student and teacher. He's my mate, yeah. She wants me to do good, yeah.

For Viliami, subject choosing patterns could depend on mostly on friends. Similarly, Ula explained, *Like most of them were because of what I liked. And it was a little bit because of my friends.*

The disengaged students did not understand much about pre-requisites and seemed to rely on their learning leaders. Most of them felt they had someone they could talk to and valued family support. *My aunty. because she went to Uni, [encourages me] to try and stay at school until I'm 18. If I'm stuck on things then I can just ask her for advice and that (Roimata). Rewi says, my dad tries to help me out heaps. Like pay for whatever. The previous year he had gone to Kip McGrath for extra maths and English, but mmm, it was too late. It was the end of the year. It was too late for me. (Rewi)*

Semi-engaged Students

The subject choosing of the semi-engaged students came from a more informed position than that of the disengaged students. Their choices had a common thread in terms of intended accomplishment. As Keta explained: *I think I just chose them on what I was good at.* Similarly Rafik was influenced by how he performed the previous year, *like how well I did in the subjects and some that I didn't do too well in, like I found hard, I didn't attempt it*

this year. The semi-engaged students who sought advice about subject-choosing reported finding their teachers approachable, and relied on their guidance. While the tutor teacher was the first port of call, advice was sought in an ongoing way with particular learning leaders the students felt they trusted:

My tutor teacher, Miss S, Miss I, and my Māori teacher. I speak to Miss S quite a lot about my school work over the year and couple of months I have, the other teachers just whenever I think I have a question to ask. (Pita)

Several of the semi-engaged students also reported the importance of parents and family members in assisting them to select subjects. For Keta it was her sister. *She really wants me to do well, because she just recently became CEO of the YMCA in Australia, so she's been pushing me for a long time. [She's] like really old. She's 30.* Ripeka looks to her mother, but understanding what was required and relying on their own decision-making could be different things.

Mum, because she always wanted me to become a nurse. Because we had to get our course booklet signed from our parents to say that it was alright to do those subjects, and if mum didn't approve of them, then I wasn't allowed to do them. ... No, I reckon I could have chosen better subjects. Because some of them I was going into to be with friends.

Understanding that choosing a particular suite of subjects would allow them university entrance was not always evident or a priority for the semi-engaged students. Comments such as *I'm not so sure, but I'm not planning on going* (Malu) were typical. There were marked variations indicated in their understanding of the term pre-requisites, from *Pre-requisite is that exams? I haven't fully learnt about it, but I know of it* (Pule) to having a clear sense of what was required.

It appeared that the semi engaged students had plans for the future even if university was not an option. While they did not make explicit reference to how their subject choices would unfold, they viewed their course-taking patterns as significant, even if at times they did succumb to peer pressure. The careers department featured in the semi-engaged students' talk especially in relation to making judgments about 'where to next'.

Engaged Students

Seeking career advice was identified as important by only one of the engaged students:

The careers, I've visited them a few times ... just talking about what subjects I would need for what I want to be and what kind of learner I am. The lady printed out some piece of paper and I had to fill in a chart to see what kind of person I was and stuff

like that. Yeah and then she gave me a list of what jobs people like me usually have. I still was confused what I wanted to be when I grow up but after choosing accounting last year I finally found out I wanted to be an accountant and the careers helped me a lot with looking at universities and stuff. And I got a small scholarship last year to go to Otago University to see how it is, and that showed me about uni and how it works. And it's all thanks to the careers. (Rawiri)

Personal agency characterised the engaged students' subject selection patterns. They consulted with their teachers, but initiated and drove exploration of their academic pathways themselves:

Well I went to some websites to see what qualifications I need for what I need to do. Yeah, I searched out what I needed to do for when I leave school. I searched out what subjects I need and then I went and asked my teachers what the prerequisites for those subjects I need and then got my information from there and then worked and studied really hard. (Jack)

The students described a growing awareness that subject-choosing was an integral part of PEP which affected later post school options. Comments such as *looking at the prerequisites for university to take the certain courses that I want to* (Ra) were typical. Furthermore if that destined suite of subjects was required there was a determination to succeed. *Statistics. I thought I wouldn't be able to do it but then I found out that if you just like learn, like enable yourself to learn, then you just find yourself getting it* (Liliena).

Descriptions of course-taking challenges indicated that all chose subjects that would give them university entrance, though the stages at which they realised the importance of prerequisites in their subject-choosing varied. Most of the senior engaged students started to plan their course pathways at the start of their secondary school career, and in some cases this was triggered by an early school career focused 3D intervention. As Pia explained: *It all kind of started year nine, thinking about it, year 10, choosing the right subjects. Yeah, very early, during that 3D episode was my big start.*

Other senior engaged students reported a more incremental change in their subject-choosing awareness as their future plans became more specific:

I didn't ask anyone. When I was young I didn't think that far ahead, or that things I was doing then would influence my ability to get into things. I first started getting information about approved subjects, then I started saying, oh, I haven't got this, haven't got that. So then I tried to shuffle it around. When you get your form to say which courses you want to take the next year, in that it says to get into that you should have taken this. But see, I didn't get that. I mean it is kind of common sense, but it never was pushed into you. (Metiria)

Nonetheless, choosing subjects they were interested in and enjoyed was important for the engaged students also. Raj explains. *Because ultimately I think that will put me in a place where I can choose a career that I'll find interesting. Because I don't want to ultimately choose a career that I won't be happy in.* While planning for their futures was prioritised, the engaged students' believed in keeping their options open:

I think that sometimes it's difficult to choose if you want to specialise in something because you're good at it, or because you like it, or because it will get you somewhere in the future. So it's good to have a balance of some subjects which are really helpful and other ones that you like doing. (Tamsin)

It was common for parental and caregiver support to be more implicit than explicit in the students' comments where the autonomy of their sons' and daughters' decisions was respected: Vika explained that she selected subjects *and my parents were happy with the choice I made.* For Raj:

Well I'm quite independent when it comes to things like that. I just know what I want to do and my parents are supportive of whatever career I choose. I'll run what subjects I'm taking and what my goals are and what not by them.

Home-school Partnerships

Bridging the gap between home and school through the HSP was viewed as helpful for breaking down barriers and helping students accept and use feedback from meetings about their progress.

Disengaged Students

A number of the disengaged students found the HSP helpful in monitoring their work habits and alerting their parents and caregivers to any barriers in their learning. It gave students a voice, a sense that they were involved in making decisions about their learning. *It's just every now and then I have gaps on things I need to work on and my parents just give me that extra motivation. It's good (Sonny).*

They gave us forms on where we were at, where we could go, what classes would benefit us more than the other one. Then she gave us a sheet on other stuff. That was alright. She gave advice as well. (Rima)

For Roimata, it was a matter of taking responsibility for getting the basics in place in the meeting with her Nan and tutor teacher so that her approach to developing her PEP could be strengthened. *They just talk about how I'm doing at school and how I have to come to school nearly every day.* Getting to the HSP meetings could be a challenge for around a third of the parents of disengaged students. In these instances although the school went to

some lengths to make flexible times for the meeting, a common barrier seemed to be the parents' workplace situations. Waka spoke of the difficulties for his mother.

Her boss wouldn't She has to get other people to look after my brothers and sisters while she's at work. Yeah, it's tough. She tries to come. She's tried so many times, but it's because her work. She finishes at 6.00 o'clock.

While Felicia knew she was under-achieving she voiced concerns about her parents' failure to meet her tutor teacher. Her uncertainty as to whether they would really want to come to a meeting underpinned Felicia's suggestion that she would have to *drag them here. No, I'd get a bash. They tell me to work hard and do like, go hard, so I can get a better future and stuff. Not like them – they work at the factory and stuff*'.

Semi-engaged Students

When the semi-engaged students described the feedback from their HSP meetings they referred to the inevitability that some of their inconsistent work habits would be exposed, but they did not appear to be fazed by such revelations. Most felt in the school domain that, *Yeah, it's good to have that family support*. They acknowledged the teachers' resistance to dominate the issues. Malu admitted that at the triadic, although he did '*sometimes not*' want to hear what was said at the HSP meeting, that having his mother at the interview meant she also was on board with any problems that might have arisen. This was important for Malu, *cos my mum always motivates me*.

One semi-engaged student was the exception and voiced concern about the potential of the HSP interview to disclose issues around schoolwork she didn't want aired, even though her mother had the information on her progress:

They're in different rooms in alphabetical order from their last name which is really cool so I know which classrooms to avoid. My mum has no idea, it's amazing, it's perfect. But then she has the report. Because it depends on the teacher as a person because some classes I don't do anything in (Eliza).

In the open conversations promoted by the HSP meeting it appeared that barriers to success were identified by all parties. Pule made mention of his mother's comment about him being easily distracted. *She goes, oh that's been a problem with him ever since he was in primary*. Pule's explanation of the process was representative of how the semi-engaged students experienced the triadic nature of the HSP partnership. It had helped him have confidence in his later one to one interactions. *Yeah, she was just helping me do good. The having the sort*

of one on one with the tutor teacher, yeah, not like having all the students round, that was good (Pule).

Though the HSP meeting was intended to address his PEP, Fernandez saw its function as domestic:

Well mostly it's just like what bad stuff I'm doing at school, like what I should work on. Like for example, if I had negative feedback from one of my teachers saying Fernandez doesn't bring his PE gear, if I had PE, it would just be simple stuff like that.

Rafik recognised that the HSP interview helped him and his parents alleviate the challenges of working through the NCEA system. *It was actually good. I could understand where I was at and my parents could understand NCEA more. Because they couldn't understand how it is, so they got a better understanding of what goes on in school for NCEA.*

Engaged Students

The HSP interview was conceived by all the engaged students as helpful, but was not reported as a high stakes experience. Rather, they described the interview as a check of what stage they were at with their work. They noted the importance of specific feedback and links to their subjects and future pathways. Significantly the engaged students had an idea of the quality of their work and consequently participated in the three way conversation process in an evaluative way. *It's more to do with how far ahead we are in the course. So if we're like a week or two behind and how we're going to get back on schedule (Rawiri).* Tamsin commented on being advised to reconsider choices carefully. *If they think there's a better choice they'll just be like, are you sure Tamsin? And stuff like that. And yeah, that's how they do it.* As Metiria explained, sometimes contribution to the triadic could be uneven: *Yeah, it's a bit weird though because my mum doesn't really get the whole NCEA thing. So when me and my teacher are talking she doesn't really get it.*

Using the Diary

The importance of the diary as an organisational system for their PEP was evident in the students' talk. It was school practice that the diary was always with them. They consistently acknowledged the emphasis placed on developing their personal management systems through the diary. Having the diary established as a tool for structured, productive learning in junior school appeared to influence the students' perceptions of how it was used later at senior level.

Disengaged Students

Most of the disengaged students had diaries and were clear about the expectations that encapsulated its use. The links between being organised and setting goals were evident. *Every two minutes of the class we have to write a simple goal for the class what you learnt,* explained Felicia. In addition the motivation to have a diary so that they could use it as a passport to move around the school was strongly apparent in the disengaged students' comments, with the exception of Waka who explained, *I don't even have a diary. Lost it in the first day.* He did not perceive this as a problem *unless, if I want to go into a different class to try and finish some of my work.*

Semi-engaged Students

From the semi-engaged students' perspectives, the benefits of active use of the diary were based less on mobility around the school and more on time management and reflection.

Well we could do it during your class or after, like five minutes before the bell rings. And you just write down what you think you need to improve on or what you think you have done good in the class. I look through my diary and I just read over it, and it usually helps me during my next class or like at the end of the day or the week or whatever I will just read my diary and it helps me. (Keta)

It helps you manage your time better. There's a part where it tells you about your homework, not your homework but what you can do outside of class, and it's got a reflection part in it. I don't really use it that much but when I got to Year 13 I realised that it's actually quite a helpful resource (Rafik).

Though for some the value of the diary had been revisited and strengthened, for other semi-engaged students the function of the diary had changed. Symptomatic of the change, Pule says he uses it *when I'm told but if I'm not told to then I just don't do it.* Also, Eliza does not use it *to write targets.* She says, *I write song words. I use it for more personal reasons and to leave class.*

Even if the students were not currently using their diaries for the intended purpose, they emphasised its usefulness in their junior school years and acknowledged the way that writing down intentions in the diary that had been instilled in their practice had lost its impetus over time.

I used to do it back in Year 10. I did it for the whole year. Yeah, at the end of the day, at home. It reminds me of what I've learnt, so I can also reflect on them more. But, yeah, sometimes I do it. I only do it when the teachers ask me to do it. But most times I don't. I just don't have that motivation to write it down. (Malu)

Engaged Students

The school diary was acknowledged by the engaged students as commonly used and carried with them most days. Because it served to encourage learners to manage their learning, it was reported by the engaged students as performing a range of functions. *It's just like what I've learnt in each class, like something different from what I learnt in the last lesson (Liliena). We are told to set weekly goals in our diaries. Just pass my maths assessment, study hard for my history exam, all that kind of thing (Raj). Just to jot down homework, things like that. When certain events and things ... (Metiria).*

Some senior students responded to the section on reflection in their diaries without always writing their thoughts down. Like the semi-engaged students, the engaged students' comments incorporated a resistance to write things down:

I think I've maybe done it twice this year. It was just more like write it so we can get out of class. Basically I've already reflected in my head. Like you actually look at what you've done, not like writing stuff down. Now I just think, I've actually done this today, quite proud of myself, bring me more. (Ra)

The Independent Learning Centre

The ILC was an embedded function of school life in that all students were timetabled to attend the centre for 90 minutes a week.

Disengaged Students

At the ILC, in addition to completing unit standards on learning, responsibility for managing their schoolwork and catching up on assessments was handed to the students. The disengaged students explained that they used their time at the ILC to typically *catch up on my health assessments and dance and sometimes go to the careers* (Felicia). When support was offered by the personnel staffing, the ILC Centre conversations were promoted with students around what warranted attention and what strategies could be used to effect improvement. With their passport (diary) students could sign out to attend a learning leader's class and get assistance. However there was a tendency for the disengaged students to avoid their timetabled ILC times. Attendance issues were common for this group and even if at school they were not always in class.

Semi-engaged Students

Findings indicated that the semi-engaged group used their ILC time more purposefully than the disengaged students at the centre.

My mum is always like, do you have homework? But I always do ILC so I don't have to do it at home because I love ILC. I get to be by myself and I get to do my own work and not have someone there like all the time. It's like in class I'll do the work where I need the teacher and if I can do it by myself I'll do it in ILC. That's why I love being independent. (Mereana)

The opportunity to sit in on other classes and have access to a learning leader was also valued as important for personal academic development, especially for those behind in their work. Students talked about this ILC dimension of PEP as being particularly helpful in supporting their achievement. As Eliza explained in the case of her English teacher:

Just ask if she's busy and then she'll be like, yeah. When I'm in her class, she can fully help me more if that makes sense. But if I'm in another class it has to be her priority so I'm kind of just there. So if I need her but someone else doesn't need her, she can help me. But if someone else in that class needs her, she can't help me. So I'm second, which I don't mind because you can't do the assessment out of class so I'm just happy to be in class to be able to finish it because it's my credits, and she's really nice to be able to just let me do that because she doesn't have to. (Eliza)

Engaged Students

Unlike the other two groups, most of the engaged students had their full license which meant they were able to be at home in their ILC time, but interestingly this was not their preferred option:

It's a 30 minute walk to home and I prefer not to take the bus, especially when my younger siblings have already gone to school. I just like being at school. I won't learn at home. Too many distractions. (Ra)

The engaged students reported working independently at ILC recognising that the staff were

not specialised in your subjects but you can ask about general learning, The only time you can ask them for support is if you are doing the ILC assessments. They focus on study skills and core skills, like transferable skills, stuff like that. They're really general topics. (Metiria)

As with the semi-engaged students, ILC served the needs of the engaged students in terms of allowing flexibility in their personal educational planning:

I've got a couple of nights where I'm full with basketball, so it's trying to use my ILC time appropriately. The teacher does allow me to sign out to English because that's my main subject I've been going to. She has a free block where she hasn't got any classes there, so it's more of a convenience. (Pia)

Differences Between Groups' Experiences of PEP Processes and Procedures

While all students described how they experienced and perceived their PEP, there were differences among the three groups in regard to subject-choosing, HSP, and how they used their diaries and ILC times. All of these PEP processes encouraged the students in the course of their study to reflect on their practice, think about what they were doing and why, and the modifications they could make to practice to be more effective. Their comments suggest the shift made in their thinking and their subsequent ability to engage in reflection about their progress.

The disengaged students readily acknowledged the accessibility of PEP systems available to them. They conceived of these processes as avenues of support, where a number placed emphasis on their whānau tutor or learning leaders telling them what subjects needed to be selected or what could be done to effect improvement. While the disengaged students recognised that they needed to participate actively in these systems of PEP, they conveyed that there were gaps in their understanding, participation and navigation of their educational pathways. At times they acknowledged some displeasure (and their parents' disapproval) of their productive attempts around their schoolwork. Nonetheless they felt doors for support were open for them even if they ended up being distracted. Regardless of how much support they were able to secure from the school systems, the disengaged students admitted making sometimes random decisions about subject choices and self-direction activities based purely on what their friends were doing or what was 'in the moment'. They also confessed to having patterns of not going to class or ILC even if they were at school. Conversely they placed importance on learning the expectations of their tutor teachers and learning leaders, which enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of their options. If they had a strong relationship with a teacher, the disengaged students indicated that they were more motivated to meet those expectations. Regardless of their clear familiarity with the school PEP systems, it was the fullness with which they embraced these systems that characterised their approaches to PEP.

The semi-engaged students accentuated the need to connect with PEP systems. They emphasised their parents and whānau tutors and they trusted learning leaders' guidance around their studies. In this way they were similar to the disengaged students, though they reported a stronger agency to act on both the advice they were given and the implications of this advice as it rolled out through their school experiences into their futures. The semi-engaged students confined their subject choices to areas they had had success in and only a

small proportion of this group acknowledged unsound motivation for subject-choosing. The semi-engaged students admitted being unmotivated at times but interestingly this did not deter them from accessing the PEP support systems available to them. Unlike the disengaged students they enjoyed the independence of utilising their ILC class for assignment work which freed up personal out of school time. While the semi-engaged students reported the need to demonstrate some personal agency around the way they negotiated their PEP, this belief was counterbalanced by an admission they were not always discerning. Though mostly cognisant of pre-requisites with regard to entry to university and career pathways, the importance of these was not stressed by the semi-engaged students in relation to intentions and plans.

The engaged students also expressed the belief that consulting with parents, whānau tutors and learning leaders was important but a key difference from the other two groups lay in their ability to make personal and independent decisions around the ways they negotiated the school educational planning systems. When it came to future pathways there was a critical realisation in the engaged students of particular prerequisites and the need to align these to future plans. If the engaged students needed to take subjects in which they had no experience, they were prepared to do so. In accepting responsibility for their achievement and ultimately their future pathways, the engaged students were purposeful and sought balance. The nature of how they used these systems changed over time as the students' expertise in negotiating their PEP deepened. From their perspectives, information about, and experiences of PEP came in collaboration with parents, tutors and teachers. The engaged students were motivated, prepared to meet challenges and focused on opportunities to improve on their academic efforts. Though they could work independently at home in their ILC time, most disciplined themselves to work at school, thus avoiding distractions. Judgments about productive attempts and what could be done to effect improvement were essentially pre-specified, owned and controlled by the engaged students themselves.

Students' Possession of Relevant Knowledge about Personal Educational Planning

Managing Data

All students had access to their personal achievement data in their daily 30 minute whānau period. They could ask their tutor teachers to look at their pie graphs and NCEA credits at a moment's notice. This computer access was also available from their learning leaders when in their subject classes. The data management system gave the students a clear picture of what was required, where they were in regard to their credits and what was missing or could

be improved on. Managing their achievement information was viewed by the students as an integral part of their PEP. For most, the importance of managing data was correlated directly to the importance of gaining NCEA credits. Comments incorporating phrases such as *I can get* or *I just need ...* pertaining to credits were prevalent in the students' talk. Several factors contributed to their construction of themselves in this way, as learners monitoring their progress and navigating their PEP.

Disengaged Students

The disengaged students made judgements about the quality of their productive attempts, suggesting that it was they who controlled their data management. Though levels of interaction with their achievement data varied for the disengaged students, all were keen to access the system. For Rewi it was about looking as much as possible.

Because I've been trying hard to get my maths credits, so I've just been asking if I can have a look at stuff. I just ask my tutor teacher. I got past Level 2, but I just need to get two more maths credits. I really want to do maths but it's got all year 11 students. That's why I don't like doing it because I sit there all by myself. That's why I hardly go.

Another important feature of their inquiry was the confidence that could be gained from the experience of looking at and managing their data. Waka had checked on it *all the time*.

Every time there's a teacher on their laptop I would ask. Yeah, last year that was big for me. This year I've kind of lost it, the motivation. I don't know. It's just in Year 11 I was keen on getting my NCEA, I was keen on getting 80 credits. Well this year, I can get them, I know that, but I think that's why, cos I'm just too cocky.

Checking data for Piri *makes me think where to work harder*, while Rima found the overview helpful *to see how much I can achieve and how much I don't achieve out of that. Makes you realise what you need to do*. As the disengaged students explained, emphasis was not on the teacher telling students what had been achieved, but more on directing the students so they could engage with their data for their own discernment. Roimata found prompting helped. *Every month my tutor teacher asks me to. I'm doing better than last year*. As a learner Sonny found that seeing his data on a regular basis could have a motivating long term influence. *It just tells me that there's some classes that I do need to work on and just be a little more focused in. It makes me just want to go for it, go for everything that I can, go for this year*.

It appeared as though the disengaged students often took a leading role in accessing their data. They also accepted responsibility for making judgments about the quality of their work

and what warranted attention. While they did not make explicit reference to strategies they would use to effect improvement, managing their data promoted conversations with their tutors and learning leaders.

Of the nine disengaged students Felicia was the only one who found looking at her data could evoke negative emotions: *They tell me to look at it. But I don't want to look at it. Because it's really poor.*

Semi-engaged Students

Possessing relevant knowledge in regard to their achievement was also important to the semi-engaged group. A large proportion of these students looked at their data at least twice a month. Often they reported that seeing their results gave them more clarity into what had been and needed to be achieved. Moreover ownership of their data incentivised the semi-engaged students to improve. They also managed their achievement data regularly. Having their data at hand served as a consistent check against which they could organise themselves. Fernandez felt it would be useful to *check every day just to be surprised*. He rationalised this as being *a bit too much*, opting instead for *probably once a week or once every two weeks. Something like that*. Rafik also used the system.

It shows how when I'm falling behind or keeping on track. Because when you're in class you don't understand that you might have missed something out but then when you check KAMAR it tells you what you have missed and what you haven't.

Implicit in these comments was a sense of control over what aspects of PEP needed focus. Several students also saw accessing their data as a means for becoming motivated around their work. Seeing her results told Ripeka *what subjects I need to work more on and pay more attention on*. Personal management of his data brought a shift in Pita's approach and a clearer understanding of the NCEA system.

Yeah they show me how I've been, like my attendance, yeah and they showed me Level 1 and Level 3. When I had my 11 credits I wasn't too sure because I didn't know how the programme runs and stuff, and then once I came back to Miss S when I was year 12, I seen it like progress then. And then I started questioning Miss about like what is it and stuff and she told me and I started just getting proud and wanting to actually progress more.

Keta equated seeing her data as a wake-up call. *Well from last year, I was kind of in Te Reo Māori. I was a little bit behind and so I think that really pushed me to get more on task and do what I had to do to get the credits*. It encouraged Malu to check *what stuff that I've not achieved in, so I can just take up on my catch up classes, so I can just pass those and move*

those out of the way. For Pule when it says the Not Achieved part it makes me feel I could have pushed myself to do it. Additionally personal data management was identified as a key to staying on track for Pule. I've only looked once this year. I looked regularly last year. ... but this year I don't know, I guess I just slipped away, but I should be doing it more often to see how I'm going.

Interestingly even if they felt they were not on track, the semi-engaged students wanted to see their data. *Even if I'm just a little bit behind I still don't get motivated. I just check up on it regardless* (Mereana). As explained by Eliza, they expect to find the data entered in a timely way. *We're like, when are you putting our credits on? And okay, I'll put them on tomorrow. We usually check them in class if the teacher is not busy.*

Engaged Students

Like the other two groups, from the engaged students' perspectives, seeing the qualifications they had gained was a tangible reward. They were convinced that they would not progress through school and into the future without qualifications. Consequently managing their data was an integral part of growing their qualifications and future plans. They looked at their data between one and two times every two months, mindful of the time lapses between credit completion and entry. They reported tracking their results more towards the end of the year when they were further along in their studies. As well as reporting increased confidence, several of the engaged students attributed improved self-esteem through seeing their NCEA credits completed. *With the pie graph, when you see like how the different coloured sections ... and how everyone's looking for that big excellence chunk in the pie graph* (Ra). For Tamsin:

It's exciting when you see a lot of gold. Then you can think about how many more you need and where you can get them and how many assessments you've got offered this term, next term. You can always look forward.

The clear visual message of the graph had impact. *It helped me focus myself on reaching my academic goals and seeing where I was with my merits and excellences* (Pia).

It motivates me because there's a graph. Red is not achieved, blue is achieved, orange is merit and yellow is excellence, and you get a pie graph. If it's all like yellow then that will influence me to keep that yellow and the same with merit. I'll just try and get as less blue achieved as possible so it influences me. (Rawiri)

The process affirmed a growing realisation of challenges that could be managed for Raj:

Well you can definitely see where you are ... in preparation for externals of course as well. For me as a learner I really like having my 80 credits by the end of term four before externals. That is just really reassuring. It does take a lot of pressure off. You still want to do well in your externals but you like to know where you are. I think it's great to see where you're at in case maybe if you haven't been doing so well in a subject you really need to say to yourself, look the evidence is here, I'm not doing so well so I have to focus on that and try harder.

While accessing his data gave Vika confidence, he admitted that seeing his own data could also be demotivating at times. *Say if you've failed a unit standard or you've just got some achievement standard that you've worked really hard at, that can be quite, might trigger some negative feelings in you that you see it on the screen.*

Conscious of future plans and career trajectories, the status of their marks was bound up with being successful at school. All the engaged students confirmed that having qualifications enabled them to have future plans as well as creating a range of other opportunities. The process opened them up to the scrutiny of others but more specifically, to self-scrutiny. Data management was not just a checklist for the three groups. It assigned all the students with a significant role to play in their PEP. Expressions of pride in all three groups were bound up with the students' entry into the socially legitimated world of NCEA success. The pride culminated in gains in confidence as well as self-esteem. All of the students expected and appreciated access to their data. What they did beyond this process characterised the salient aspects of their engagement.

Academic Counselling

The students did not perceive one person as a 'giver of advice'. Instead, all groups placed emphasis on a collaborative understanding of their learning and qualification pathways.

Disengaged Students

For the disengaged students it was a matter of working with their teachers and receiving feedback which was both achievement and improvement focused. Sonny's comment is typical of the dispositional attitudes and behaviours of the disengaged group:

All the teachers have just been there, they support you a lot and they're just there to keep everything open for you. I talk to my teachers every now and then. I just go with the flow. Just whatever comes I just go for it.

The Semi-engaged Students

This group was more pro-active in generating discussion around their PEP and for most it was an ongoing process, as explained by Keta. *I talk to the teachers during my class time*

and they give me feedback. The opportunity to discuss progress at whānau time with a tutor teacher was also reassuring:

He tells me what I need to do and like how far. It's really good because I don't check it through the year because I kind of avoid it. But when we go see him I kind of am usually further ahead than what I thought which is good, so I like those meetings.
(Eliza)

Engaged Students

The engaged students appeared to rely more on their learning leaders than their whānau tutors to get in depth information around their studies. *They'll [tutors] answer your questions, but only skimming the surface. Not that they won't, but they don't think to go deeper kind of* (Metiria). Like their peers in the other two groups, the engaged students acknowledged their teachers in regard to progress at school. *Most of my teachers, probably all of them, push you in a good way and stuff* (Rawiri).

These students were generally more specific about the different avenues and sources they could seek out in their PEP. Their advice-seeking behavior tended to draw from a range of sources and often relied on their teachers as sounding boards. *My history teacher, yeah she mainly just pushes us to get excellence. Like she gives us examples from the year before and she gives us guidance on how to do it* (Liliena). For others:

And last year I got a little tab saying to see [my dean] and you go what's this about? Then they tell you about your credits and that. But subject choices, the computing teacher said your knowledge is too good for year 12 computing, take year 12 stats this year as well as calculus.

Yeah certain teachers that you just, maybe you listen to more. I know like my drama teacher for one, you'll be able to listen to him and you know he'll provide you with advice that you just want to say, okay, I take that on board and I'll use that to become a better learner. (Raj)

For all the students it was not a matter of being counselled academically by the more experienced expert. The students expected to have a role in making judgements about both the quality of their work and where their productive attempts could lead them. There were, however, differences in how this knowledge could inform decisions about making changes in practice.

Thinking Forward: Future goals

Embedded in all the systems of PEP at Orua College was a requirement that students have established goals. This expectation which began through junior school levels was recorded

in their diaries and monitored in an ongoing way by their learning leaders and whānau tutors. The focus involved setting goals for a range of learning, study and career goals, planning their learning pathways to meet their goals and monitoring progress towards the goals set. The practice of setting these various goals involved long term career and future study goals, medium term (NCEA) qualification goals to meet these long term goals, and additional short term goals to meet these medium term goals. Students were also required to set personal goals in their PEP.

Disengaged Students

Predictably what the disengaged students had experienced already about school, formed the basis of the goals they implemented. Despite their reservations about achieving highly in their schoolwork they demonstrated understandings about goal setting in their comments. For most, goals were prioritised around establishing and managing routines for their learning. *Like come early to class, my attendance. Sometimes I look after my little brothers and sisters* (Felicia). If attendance were not consistent, maintaining a focused goal could be problematic, as explained by Viliami. *I haven't really thought about it. I haven't been coming to school.* Other comments in the disengaged group encapsulated an awareness of the need for qualification driven goals: *Pass Level 2 would probably be the biggest one. Smaller goals would just to be on task* (Sonny); *To get Level 3, pass Level 3. Hopefully get into Uni or MIT to study more social work* (Rima); *Just like try my hardest to pass Level 2 and just get as far as I can get* (Rewi).

Several students spoke of a tendency to lack goals. Though Piri described going along to the careers department, he felt that he had no goals for leaving school. He had gone at the beginning of the year for work experience. *You just do practicals out there, do theory in class.* It was something he was doing but it did not excite him. Waka described in some detail about how setting goals had impacted on his thinking outside of school, but did not see this impact as applicable to his academic work:

Little goals, like as in I'm going to do lots and lots of weights and I'm going to go for a run, because I want to be fit when I grow up. I want to do something with like MMA. Yeah that's my thing right now. Yeah it's a lot of discipline but I can do it.

When asked if he thought he could transfer those goals and disciplines into school work, and doing better at school, Waka did not think that would happen. Ula had no clear example of a goal. Although he planned to do a course for a builder's apprenticeship, he felt that this and setting a goal at school were *quite different things actually*. When asked where he saw

himself in five years' time, he commented: *I wouldn't have a clue. Doesn't worry me at this point* (Ula).

Semi-engaged Students

The semi-engaged students spoke of being committed to their academic goals. As several students emphasised, they were still learning about their academic pathways and the likely influence this might have on future plans. This group of students seemed to be the most torn about allegiances to their PEP. Sometimes they used goal setting to help them meet other expectations of the school, as explained by Pita. *Mine was mainly to be on time, come in correct uniform.* In these instances allowing distractions to keep them off task was often at the heart of the semi-engaged students' talk. Away from the presence of teachers, Rafik engaged with his peers in goal setting behaviour. There was an expectation they would continue to support each other:

I say to my friends that if I have any homework then I will try and get it done on time and some of my other friends, they have trouble with getting to school so they try and get to school on time. We just have our own little goals (Rafik).

While the students believed they had much to learn, unlike the disengaged students they seemed to have faced some of the challenges which enabled them to persevere. Goal setting had been introduced early in their school careers. One such time was a three day episode in junior school and this had had a particularly enduring influence on Malu. *It's called: Do you have what it takes to be...? It was the army force and the police force.*

Similar to about half of the disengaged students, most of the semi-engaged group was focused on NCEA qualification driven goals. Their comments gave some insight into how they targeted certain gaps and shortfalls in their performance for their goals. For Malu, English was the focus *cos I'm kind of weak at English.* Ripeka was gradually progressing to complete Level 2 and add Level 3 to her successes, *and so far it's been working,* she says. In year 12, Pita was constantly setting higher goals for credits. *Yeah, like maybe every like fortnight,* while Keta concurred that goals were *mostly just trying to gain into NCEA Level 3 for this year.* As his competence and confidence increased Rafik gave some insight into how the practice of goal setting had been instrumental in supporting his PEP:

Yeah, I made actually quite a big goal. I reckon Level 3 NCEA is a challenge, so for me that would be my biggest goal for my future. Yeah, I've got University Entrance. Now I just need to gain my Level 3 NCEA.

When describing their goals, all but one of the semi-engaged students emphasised the importance of working towards a qualification and ultimately a career. For Pule goal setting in itself did not necessarily offer assurance:

I worry about what I'm going to do in the future because sometimes I feel under pressure but at the same time I feel not under pressure like, you know what I mean. To pass NCEA Level 2, out of school just get my restricted licence. I think NCEA Level 2 in some subjects it's going good, like I'm getting all the credits. Maths is alright, but mostly English, it's too much work.

Others like Mereana envisaged that she would:

Probably just have my job, a part time job, not sure what it is, by the time I'm 18. I want to have a job and be saved up to move out of home and get my own flat with my sister and have a job to support it.

Keta wanted to go to university, a goal she had had since *I first started high school because it's something that no one in our family has done*. A work-life balance was also prevalent in the goals she set. *I think just, sport is just staying fit and I think just always being in a sports team*. Several students spoke of visiting the careers advisor and consulting with their tutor teachers about their goals in an ongoing way, as Rafik explained:

I usually do that during tutor time with my tutor teacher, but most of the time when I'm sitting with my friends then we talk about what we can do, like every week. At the start of the week we all sit down and we tell each other, oh this is my goal for the week, hopefully we can complete it by Friday. I talk to my friends and tell them this is what I want to do when I leave school.

Making goals transparent through the HSP meant that parents and caregivers played a supportive role. In Fernandez's case this was extra incentive to reach his goal:

Last year I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life. So I was just like flowing and I failed Level 1 by eight credits. And this year I promised my dad that I will get Level 2 before my externals. If I do then he is going to buy me a ticket to America.

As confidence increased along with an awareness of emerging adulthood, Eliza set her goal around *Moving out. Anything. Just moving out and go into the city. I love that life. Like that fast pace on your feet life and I don't want to sit behind a desk job.*

Engaged Students

Without exception the engaged students had clear goals that revolved around their qualification pathway of NCEA credits and academic learning. Like the other two groups they included short-term goals in their timeframes (such as finishing an assessment) but

more generally they aspired to achieving highly and putting in processes that would support the delivery of quality work. Over half of the engaged students began thinking about their goals in the early part of their secondary school careers. As explained by Jack, *I started thinking at the end of Year 10, going around and asking for advice and all that for what I need*, while for Pia *it all kind of started year nine thinking about it, year 10 choosing the right subjects*. Goal setting for Vika was:

Maybe even setting up a study plan for the upcoming holidays, just to do well I guess ... excellences and merits. It started developing around year 11 and then I thought more and more about it in year 12 and 13.

From their descriptions it appeared that the students were excited about getting endorsements and were energised to improve: Tamsin aimed *just to get Level 2 with an excellence endorsement*. Pia, who liked to set goals, also aimed for an endorsement, and Jack was *aiming to achieve NCEA Level 2 with a merit or excellence endorsement* as many credits at that level as possible. Emphasis was also placed on how attaining an endorsement could be supported. Metiria reported on a discussion with his whānau tutor:

Level 3 endorsement, that was one of my goals, then we broke that down into attendance, home learning, things like that. Just little things that will help into all opportunities that I can, just to widen my learning or whatever.

Once the engaged students had identified their goals and understood the layering expected to reach these, it was presumed they would take more responsibility for their learning. While they did not always make explicit reference to the school systems that generated aspects of PEP, their comments reflected an understanding of the underlying supportive network available to them:

My whānau teacher, yeah she mainly helps me. Just like keeping it in my diary and looking back to see if I've achieved or done something leading to achieving that goal. Like to get a certain amount of credits by a time frame. It sort of motivates me to keep on trying until I achieve it. (Liliena)

The engaged group also placed importance on what appeared to be a natural process of building personal goals into their plans. In these instances goal setting allowed a more objective overview of the challenges, opportunities as well as social and work pressures in their lives.

I wanted to get my restricted and full licence. I wanted to get a part time job. I wanted to get an endorsement for NCEA. I wanted to apply for scholarships for Māori students or just a normal scholarship and for that I would have to get an endorsement and yeah, get university entrance and those were my goals pretty much.

In this first term I've achieved a lot and I'm pretty confident about the standards we have this year, so yeah, that's what this term is about pretty much. (Rawiri)

It was time management, like balance my time to do homework and be able to socialise. Just KFC. A maximum of 10 hours a week. Sometimes it's going okay but sometimes it's just a little bit too much. (Liliena)

Sport featured in the engaged students' talk about personal goals. Indeed, several students referred to sporting challenges as interfacing with the development of their future educational pathways. Jack wanted to go skydiving and Pia identified a future of having a job and career while *still be playing basketball, get into a koru club which is above regional playing and it's kind of slowly getting into national play*. Ra had thought about the quality of his expected academic performance and how this could be compromised. The tools that he had acquired to make sense of his short term goal setting around academic study also informed a decision to give up one of his passions:

I set them quite broad, like complete all my home learning tasks that I'm given during the week. Yeah. I actually had to give up a lot of my extracurricular activities, which was badminton. It was quite unfortunate cos I liked playing badminton. It was my, what's it called, my replacement for not continuing with PE, physical education. But I had to give that up because it was really getting in the way of my studies. (Ra)

As these statements illustrate, all students were familiar with the practice of setting goals for learning, study, personal and career pathways. Proficiency around meeting their goals and monitoring progress towards the goals set varied however, between the three groups of students. Predictably the engaged students exemplified their commitment to continued learning through their goal setting. The comments from the other two groups demonstrated a more erratic commitment to their PEP, though interestingly most students reported willingness rather than resistance to set goals.

Career goals

Disengaged Students

Regardless of how strongly academic and career goals featured in the disengaged students' talk, most believed that having a career was important and opened up further lifetime opportunities. However there was a difficulty in distinguishing between what the students really wanted to do and where their academic qualifications had led them. Thinking about a career was not without challenges or problems and sometimes perceived low expectations:

I have to get a plumbing job and just travel to different countries and see the world. I try not to do any bad stuff, so I don't get any criminal records so you can't travel

and stuff. ... Like listen in class so I can get a better job in the future and stuff. That's basically all what I can do. (Rewi)

Next year I'm taking a course for plumbing. I hear that it's easier to get into doing, like for working. (Viliami)

Developing a relationship with the careers department enabled students to access opportunities as they arose. Felicia was awaiting a GATEWAY placement at a local sports shop as she wanted to be a sports teacher. Conversely rather than having low expectations of her career path she felt that her part time job assisted her in this decision *because I have like a retail job*, whilst despite poor attendance, Roimata's ambition was *to go to uni and study as a Māori teacher*.

Whatever evaluative knowledge the disengaged students had about their futures, successful progress at school did not seem to be a motivating factor. Waka wanted to pursue his extra curricula interest in his immediate future beyond school: *I'll be fighting. But I'll probably have a job as well. I won't be a full committed fighter then*. Career motivation for Rima was a combined effort from *my mum and the careers office*. Here it had been suggested to *look at the options that I can do, like Army, get experience from there first, and then go off from there*. After the army it was Rima's ambition to be a *full time social worker*. She had thought ahead to life beyond school career advice. *Well it's made a clearer path for me because year 11 was real confusing, didn't know what to do, or where to go or what you're doing* (Rima)

Less frequently this group had unclear ideas about where they were headed in terms of a career. Piri admitted to feeling unmotivated but saw himself in the future as *hopefully working*, and having *my own house*. Thinking about a career was not a high priority for Sonny, a year 12 student. *Not yet, I haven't dug deep into the situation*.

Semi-engaged Students

Implicit in the responses of the semi-engaged group was motivation to succeed in a career that they could gain fulfilment from. In contrast to the disengaged group whose career aspirations seemed more of a compromise than a choice, this group of students were optimistic about their future career prospects even if they weren't sure of how these prospects would be realised. They seemed excited about their careers through a developing commitment to navigating their academic and career pathways. The structure of the PEP system invited them to make decisions by exploring a range of possibilities. There was a sense of openness in the way they expressed ideas about the future. Their learning leaders,

whānau tutors and parents appeared to have valuable evaluative and productive input into the process. Students' comments reflected the involvement of all parties and their willingness to input and listen to what the students aspired to. For many of the semi-engaged group it was a process of weighing up their options.

I'm not sure. I just really want to have a job I'm happy with and get on with it. Like mum says and dad says, oh you can be a doctor, you could be a flight attendant, you can do anything you want because you've got opportunities. But I don't really want a big flash job. I just want a normal life. See mum says cause I'm real good with kids, she said I should go into early childhood and then, but then there's other stuff like bar tending. I think that would be a cool as job but that's not going to be a career because I'll grow old. Can't be in a club when I'm 50. (Mereana)

My main three ideas have been, the first ever one was start my own shop because I don't really want to work when I'm older, like 30. I don't want to work after 30. So I was hoping I could own my own shop, work for about 10 years in there and then have the rest of my life to myself because I'm getting money because I have people working for me, like a successful business. Yeah, and the second one was be a cop for two years to be a detective. And then my uncle was talking to me about this one course, it's not a course, it's like university, but it's like aeroplane university. I'm hoping that I can start at the end of this year because then I'll finish that course when I'm 19. And as soon as I start I'll be making \$150 an hour, that's my first pay and then I get pay rises. That's aeroplane engineering. (Fernandez)

Some students spoke about the Careers Centre as instrumental in their ongoing career seeking understanding, with Gateway featuring in a number of their comments. Most indicated that they had adopted the practice of calling into the Careers Centre on a regular basis. Ripeka spoke of how her interest had been awakened and broadened:

Every Friday instead of coming to school a group of students, we get picked and we go out to like The Warehouse and we help them out there like for retail. I've really been looking at the sport and rec industry, but then again since I've been on this Gateway course I've also wanted to look at the retail industry because it's really interesting. I thought it was boring but really when you're actually in that industry it's pretty interesting. (Ripeka)

For example the Star courses, I always ask when they start, when they finish, what do they give you, how many credits it's worth? Is it going to do me good or bad? Is it just wasting my time or am I going to get advantage out of this course? (Fernandez)

Rafik had felt despondent about his career choices until he visited the careers department:

Yeah, well I want to go to university and I want to do a bachelor of sports because I really enjoy sports and I know it's a job that I will enjoy and it won't be like I wake up every day and be like, oh I don't want to do this anymore. It was the careers

advisor. She told me to make a list of everything that I enjoy. Because at the start of the year my mind was so confused that I didn't know which career pathway to take. And I had a number of choices but now I've decided that I'm only going to go one way. (Rafik)

Pita's comments encapsulated his short and long terms plans in job seeking. *I hope to get a job and then get me sussed and then try and go to a course, a design course and study design, like label designing and then probably try and start my own label design business,* while Eliza wanted to *do a course in town for airline because I want to go into airline.*

Malu had been influenced to change his career motivation:

When I was year 10 I was thinking of doing art. But then kind of lost it. Then I was looking at my mate Alex, how he was thinking of going to the police force, since we're going to stay in New Zealand forever, so might as well just have a job where I can be close where my family is, and also protect them at the same time. So that got me interested.

In contrast, of the nine semi-engaged students Keta and Pule were unclear about their career plans, *Sometimes I just want to go for the work day just to see what it's like. I haven't done any because most of the time I'm too late for them and they've already got people (Pule).*

Engaged Students

The comments of the engaged students exemplified their commitment to career goals. Continued learning about careers was embedded in their PEP. Tamsin elaborated upon this importance:

Everybody throughout your whole life asks so what are you going to do and then eventually as you get closer and closer to leaving school it becomes more directed about how you're going to do it. So there's never a point where you go, okay, now you have to start thinking about this. It kind of just increases in intensity as you get older.

University was considered a popular destination for these students with most the first in their families to attend. Implicit in their responses was an inquiring stance about their future studies. Liliena had planned a university career *to be a teacher ... to go to uni and probably get a degree or diploma.* Ra found the prospect *quite frightening to be perfectly honest. I definitely want to go to university, get a university education and whatnot.* Jack's focus was *to work with the IT so maybe information and networking, computer engineering.* Vika had done the research himself:

I plan to obviously go to university to study law conjoint with some other degree. I looked on the university website. I talked to people who are currently in those programmes at uni, like law ... I've found it mainly through the careers department. And there are a lot of posters around the school suggesting what subjects you should take for a particular job area.

For Metiria weighing up her options was important. Though her mum wanted her to go to university, the police force was her preferred choice:

If only I wanted to go. I was thinking maybe a degree first and then, I don't know, it gives me time to mature. I'm looking at the police force. Well I've had that for quite a while. I'm only coming to school now so that if that does not work out then I have something to fall back on.

Rawiri commented in some detail about the importance of his change in attitude and how this had impacted on his future career decision making:

First off I really wanted to be a police officer but after being so good at accounting I chose that to be my career pathway and my parents would rather me go to university for accounting than a policeman for some reason. Probably because like I'll be away from family if it happens and so they want me to do accounting or something like that. ... Hopefully get a Bachelor's in commerce and computer science perhaps and I'm going to apply for the University of Auckland. I'm just going to apply for many universities and see which one is more like efficient to me. And then after that I'm hopefully going to get a job obviously and just see where that job takes me.

Formulating career plans had been an early experience for Pia but initial specification of intentions had undergone some scrutiny.

I kind of knew that I wanted to do sport and recreation, or PE teaching pretty much from primary really, just from growing up around it and everything. But I did want to keep it very broad just in case I did have a change and yeah, cause during year 9, 10, I was considering accounting or something like that. But I definitely want to go into sport and recreation. (Pia)

In contrast early career plans had undergone a change for Raj.

At around five I always had the dream of becoming an architect but then just recently I've kind of abandoned that. I haven't really figured out what I want to do. Obviously as I said I'd like to get a university education and my, more of a dream more than an actual goal, is to become an actor. But I do realise that that's quite, it is really competitive and it's a hard industry to get into, so I do have some backups.

Tamsin's comment is illustrative of change where she had also thought about being an actor.

For some strange reason I want to be a dentist. See these are strange things, quite far apart. It's just temporarily out there. I showed no interest in it and then one day I

just decided I wanted to be a dentist and it came out of nowhere and I have no explanation for why I'd want to be a dentist - because everyone hates dentists.

A 3D episode in junior school to scaffold PEP had started Ra thinking about his future pathway:

In year 9, after that 3D episode, I was perhaps focused on being an accountant in the future. But now I'm kind of shifting slowly away and going to maybe economy, commerce or something like that, economist.

Differences between Groups' Possession of Relevant Knowledge

From the students' perspectives managing their data, seeking advice and affirmation about issues to do with their schoolwork via academic counselling, and setting goals were all part and parcel of everyday school life. Most students had relevant knowledge about how best to navigate the systems available, alluding to a sense of control and associated enthusiasm around these processes. Both the accessibility and specificity of the information they received were important characteristics of their data seeking patterns. Sometimes this knowledge assisted in the implementation of work and behaviour changes around their studies. Nearly all students found checking and managing their data a motivating factor. They attributed personal management of their NCEA credits as a catalyst for renewed enthusiasm in seeing work through to completion. When most of the disengaged students accessed their personalised data it did not cause them to react negatively. The engaged students and a large proportion of the semi-engaged group expressed feelings of personal satisfaction and success from seeing their academic results. Students in fact expected and appreciated the opportunity to address the status of their NCEA results.

Given the belief that goal setting was also an embedded part of their PEP, most students thought it important that they should have an understanding of expected learning. In their experience, the practice of setting goals had become an accepted dimension of PEP whether in the form of long term career and future study goals, medium term (NCEA) qualification goals or short term goals to meet these medium term goals. Keeping track of learning progress towards these goals identified areas of learning where improvements could be made and targeted actions planned. Similar to their data management and academic conversations, goals provided a point of reference against which students could map their progress and make judgments about what they had achieved. There was a sense that teachers did not dominate the process, though support was offered. Consequently most students possessed knowledge of, or had identified goals for school and/or beyond. While the

students considered goal setting an integral part of school life, key differences between the three groups of students became apparent when considering their understanding and commitment to implementing their goals.

Setting goals at school was not carried out by all of the disengaged students. However the act of goal setting mitigated the potentially damaging effects of poor performance and opened up opportunities for envisaged change. Those goals often related in a straightforward way to short term outcomes such as attending all classes. In some instances the disengaged students expressed little concern about their futures and their career goals were fragmented, formed as a wish rather than a purposeful intention, without any practical scaffolding. A number of the disengaged students saw no relationship between setting goals around schoolwork and pathways beyond school. Recognition of a career was sometimes offset by the dilemma of not being committed enough in school studies to have the appropriate pre-requisites. In some cases career goals had been adopted without any genuine interest or enthusiasm. They were framed as a solution that often complied with the suggestions of the careers department, parents or caregivers. Despite this, overall the disengaged students' comments conveyed a general optimism about their futures in general.

The semi-engaged students specified their goals more succinctly and conveyed a general positivity and sense of awareness around the helpfulness of goal setting. Like their disengaged counterparts, the semi-engaged students often framed their school goals in the short term, as a reaction to situations they found themselves in due to under-performance or erratic attendance. There was a sense that sticking with expected learning at school would enable better choices in the long term. In a few instances goals were set reluctantly and not always developed in support of future aspirations. Identifying weaknesses in their subject performance was a common focus for the semi-engaged students, resulting in targeted medium goals for NCEA credits. Students who were active around goal-setting in this way showed a greater awareness of longer term pathway requirements. While they understood and articulated the need for goal setting within their PEP, they sometimes revealed a lack of determination to resist distractions and attain their goals. However the goals they did set were expressed enthusiastically and they were specific and often confident about their career goals. Identifying a variety of future options generally, the semi-engaged students saw setting goals as beneficial to their future.

All engaged students were committed to and excited about specifying goals at school and beyond. Some students' examples of goals were framed in a similar manner to those of the

other two groups, but their goals tended to be less focused on gaining credits and more concerned with gaining levels and endorsements. A factor that was consistent within this group's responses was an acute awareness of embedded timeframes and contexts for goal setting. An understanding of the impact of their goals included cognisance of pressures as well as pathways beyond school. This was a dimension of goal setting only some of the semi-engaged students shared. Of importance to the engaged students was the synergy between school and career goals. Identifying specific careers, they explained, changed aspirations, intentions and back-up plans they had experienced throughout the goal setting process. While they made reference to the difficult task of setting and achieving appropriate goals, they acknowledged that the process had enabled them to have confidence in their decision-making with regard to their future pathways.

The Impact of PEP on Secondary Students

The students found it relatively easy to comment on their experiences, perceptions and knowledge of PEP practices. It was more difficult for them to assess whether they had become efficient learners or what their lifelong learning might look like. However comments about how they faced challenges and engaged with difficulties associated with their PEP gave insight into how their evaluative knowledge and expertise had developed around managing and navigating their pathways. As they explained, often without reservation, about how some of their practices and outlooks had changed and in many cases expanded, the impact of PEP was revealed.

Views on Becoming an Efficient Learner

Disengaged Students

The students were aware of their development and potential efficiencies as learners. This involved time management, developing their learning identities and increasing personal agency over their educational journeys. Often they were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the work demands made on them and were unable to fulfil their responsibilities. From their descriptions of practice, their work habits were not always developed in support of articulated intentions which were rarely framed in the long term. Intentions could also vary depending on the moment. Ignoring participation for lesser results was a compromise Waka was prepared to make even if this hampered his performance as a learner.

Too much work, but that's kind of why I drift off in class, cause I think I don't need to do that cause I can pass. ... happy with achieve. I think it's just how I am, the type of person I am. ... Oh it has to do with my friends, but yeah it's just mainly me.

Conversely, while it might be assumed that social interactions with their friends would take precedence over being motivated at school, Roimata felt she had become a better learner because *my friends are in most of my classes and they do all of their work*. Viliami recognised the need to be motivated, but found this difficult. With his friends, he had sought support. *I go to youth now. After having a pastor, like what they talk to us about, they make us motivated into coming and doing stuff that we're not really used to doing.*

Membership in the community of the school was an important issue for the disengaged students. Even if they did not go to class, they belonged to the school and had no desire to leave it. Although in the majority of instances they expressed general disappointment in their efficiencies as learners and the level of commitment they gave to their PEP, they mentioned the systems and opportunities available to them to improve those efficiencies. Rewi's comment is illustrative of many of the other students in his group. *Just should have listened in class*. Desire for continued learning was erratic but could sometimes be rekindled by an HSP interview or seeing credits for an assignment added to the data management system. For Sonny, the ongoing interface with PEP systems at school had brought him closer to realising expected learning. It was a matter of awareness and a willingness to take responsibility for and ownership of his learning. *In Year 9 I was never on task and I learnt that you have to just buck up and start working properly, and that's probably when I made that change to start going for everything that I could.*

Semi-engaged Students

A number of the semi-engaged group also relied on motivated peers to stay motivated themselves. Motivation for Pita came *mainly from my mates that want to learn*. Despite all the systems in place for these students, focusing exclusively on navigating their pathways was challenging. Ripeka felt she was *not very good at it, but I try, I do try*, she said. Examining practice and making changes as a result was ongoing for Rafik: *Yeah I try not to think of all the negatives. I try to think of what is positive, what good you can get out of doing stuff.*

When Ripeka noted a shift in her performance, the importance of a teacher's help was identified.

When I used to take Māori last year, our old teacher used to give us vocabulary that we had to learn over the week and then sentence structures, like really useful sentence structures that most people do use these days. And because we were coming up to our external exams we really needed like basic sentence structures.

The semi-engaged students commented on their teachers and parents as being instrumental in spurring them along. This helped them become better learners. Comments such as, *Well Miss S, she's helped me out a lot with pushing* (Pita) were typical of this group. Encouragement to engage with academic learning was associated with further study because of confidence and knowledge gained. Help from teachers and parents had encouraged Rafik *not to give up*. He attributed this support to the fact that he was *still doing Year 13*.

Several students made links between the emotions they had experienced as a result of engaging with their PEP and increased self-esteem and confidence. While the semi-engaged students acknowledged the struggle to stay on task with their learning at school, they understood the need to develop work habits that supported their intentions. Keta commented on added advantages her work through the ILC had given her as a learner. *I think with the unit standards [learning about learning] that it just helps me even more to have that knowledge*. Unit standards to support efficient learning had also contributed to a growing realisation in Eliza that there was one solution to being successful. *I hate to say it, but studying*.

Engaged Students

The engaged students described their learning experiences in terms of developing confidence and independence. A common opinion was the challenge of developing suitable time management skills to find a balance between completing homework, schoolwork and engaging in out of school activities. Raj described the process as *something that you pick up naturally because the work gets noticeably harder and the workload picks up every single year, so it's really your choice whether you want to become more efficient as the work piles on*. Participation could promote a realistic long term outlook. *I've just like mainly taught myself to actually be engaged*, said Liliena, *because it will have an impact on my future. I've just taught myself to listen in class and take notes*.

The engaged students had stronger control of their PEP than the other two groups, with most admitting they felt *on track*. Tamsin's view was that it hadn't been too important until the later school years. Growing engagement with the systems within the school had meant stronger self-efficacy for the engaged students. As Ra explained, *well I reckon my personal education has turned out much better. I finally realised the more work you put in the more you gain from it*.

Growing maturity brought about a new awareness and change in attitude for Rawiri as the realisation of becoming a more efficient learner manifested in responsibility and ownership of his PEP.

Oh 9 and 10, I didn't do any extra curriculum study. I just studied at school, go home, sleep and live, but now as a Year 12 and 13, I've realised how important it is to revise the notes that you've done from the same day. So I just look over my notes and do whatever homework necessary and that usually helps me as a senior student to pass.

Tamsin traced the process of taking responsibility to progress her efficiencies around learning.

As you go through every year you build on your knowledge about how to learn. This last year I had a history assignment where it was all about how you gathered and sorted information. You actually didn't have to do anything with that information until another assessment. It was just all based on getting that information and you sorting it. Then this year when I had a history assessment I used the same method to get my information that we had learnt last year instead of just printing off screeds of stuff and then finding stuff.

The engaged students acknowledged the support of their teachers, particularly the array of skills they had been able to acquire and apply in becoming more efficient learners. As explained by Pia, *they let us know of different ways that they can help us study*. According to Rawiri, adopting the practice of communicating and specifying their needs also had some perceived benefits. *Definitely not trying to say this in a bad way but definitely bugging the teachers and bugging your lecturers, so just try and get the best out of the lesson that you can and participate*. Metiria found *the teachers are quite hands on here and they ask you if you are alright sometimes and if you need help, blah, blah, all that stuff*, while Ra found that he had been helped through *tips from previous teachers that I've had during college. Like shortening your sentences, to abbreviate words, to make not copying a lot quicker, so that you don't miss out those important bits in a big dictation*. And for Pia, teacher support was appreciated. *Just by letting us make a poster and put it in front of you so that every morning you wake up and you see and you can read the information*.

The engaged students demonstrated a variety of approaches to their work which also involved personal agency. It seemed that they interrogated their options in a more detailed manner than the other two groups. Rawiri told of a website he had signed into.

[It was called] *Study It*, and it's a New Zealand website obviously, and there is a part on the forum which tells you about how to study and stuff and I just follow that like flash cards. I never thought of that when I was Year 9, highlighting and stuff.

Acquiring a repertoire of particular skills was also key for Rawiri who had learned through his school studies the importance of planning.

For example in my computing and history class planning is basically the assessments. It's the whole assessment. The outcome isn't really what they focus on, it's just the planning what you do and from that, from the standards I've done with that, it's taught me how to plan efficiently.

Parent involvement was also important to the engaged students in becoming an efficient learner around their PEP. Tamsin felt that it had to be started with the parents, *but then, because it's going to be your decision, you want to have the knowledge to make a decision and not be forced into making a decision.* Raj acknowledged his parents' role in his motivation to be an efficient learner, and appreciated this was at a distance. *My parents, they'll be inquisitive and they'll ask about what I'm doing at school and whatnot, but they know I'm like [motivated], so they don't constantly keep track.* Ra told of his parents' response to his success, saying they *kind of already expected me to be great.*

So last year when I said to them, oh my gosh, I achieved Level 1 with excellence, my mum was just like, oh that was expected of you, you were going to get it anyway. I was like, what? I guess they don't really realise how hard it is now.

Driving Your Own Learning

There were times when students in all three groups commented on being excited about their learning and aspects of PEP associated with this learning. Ostensibly their excitement (and in many cases commitment) arose from a perception that changes had taken place in terms of their involvement and navigation of learning processes. These changes to a greater or lesser degree included developing deeper understanding of their learning, gaining a sense of pride in credits achieved and the extrinsic rewards associated with NCEA. Ultimately it was taking increased responsibility for learning that signaled the most change in the way the students navigated their PEP. While all were able to describe the need to drive their learning, there were conspicuous differences between the three groups in regard to their agency to do so.

Disengaged Students

Reservations about their ability to be consistent were expressed by most of the disengaged students. Dispositional issues emerged as potentially limiting factors in being able to drive

personal learning. When it came to describing how they drove their learning most referred to barriers that prevented them from doing this successfully. In a number of instances phone texting was identified as a cause for diversion, while Felicia's comment *I get like distracted from friends* was also at the core of other students' reasons. There were glimmers of excitement and satisfaction from time to time in the disengaged students' comments about their learning processes and the way they navigated their PEP. Support structures, learning leaders and whānau tutors featured in these descriptions but the need for underlying independence was evident in the students' talk. *Most of the time it's me and every now and then I do get a bit of a push from the teachers, but yeah, most of the time it's just independent* (Sonny).

Semi-engaged Students

The semi-engaged students described the importance of driving and owning their learning in a positive manner. This included discovering personal attributes they had otherwise been unaware of and a decline in feelings of inadequacy. As the reality of a world beyond school became closer, the conventions of succeeding in that world became more apparent for Rafik:

I think over the years you become more mature and you understand what you need to do and I think that's what has happened to me. Like in the previous years I didn't really take it as serious, but then when I realised this year that I really need to crack down and do my work otherwise I'm going to end up nowhere. We've had a couple of friends that have left school and they just ended up doing nothing. So we decided that we don't want to be like them. We want to go further and we want to have a future, because nowadays you need education for everything. Yeah like you go and apply for a job and then they ask you for your certificate, for NCEA. And if you don't have it then you can't do anything. This year there has been a lot of hard things and I've just tried not to give up. I've just kept going on because I realised that it's a change from last year. This year will be my final year of school and I feel that I need to do well in it. So I need to start doing the work. Hopefully I'll get in to Auckland University. But if not then AUT is another option.

Despite this common thread in the semi-engaged students' talk that it would be difficult to get anywhere in life without a good education, they could be uncertain about what the future held:

What helps me learn is if I've got friends around me that we're sort of on the same ... they're motivated. Maybe about like five out of the 10 friends or something, yeah. I hope to be working, definitely working, but maybe working with a diploma or Bachelor or something under my belt. It's just hard thinking of what to do, like how

you see it in five years' time, 10 years' time. I can't really see myself like after school, during school yeah (Pule).

The all apparent inner conflict of distractions and being unmotivated presented ongoing challenges to commitment to learning. *If I'm like off track the teacher tells me I'm not doing this right or I'm not doing that, and then I start working again ... and then I'll start talking (Ripeka).*

Inspiration to drive personal learning came in a number of forms and for many of the semi-engaged students started around year 11 when the demands of NCEA become a reality.

I think it's mainly just my family, they just make me do it, or not make me, but that's what inspires me to do it, because I want to make a change. It's just trying to know what I want to do. Yeah. I think I can do a lot here, but it's just when I have those days, just takes me off task (Keta)

Mum knows that I don't like school but she's come to the point well, what can she do? She can't throw me in the car and drag me in kicking and screaming you know. I'm the only one in my family who's made it the longest. I want to finish and get my qualifications. I don't have anything else to fall back on. I don't want to drop out of school and just stay home all day. I want to at least have a job, I want to get a part time job and come to school as well because I don't want to just leave on my Level 1, that's going to get me McDonald's. (Mereana)

Fernandez felt that he did drive his own learning. *Probably when I thought about my life and my future, when I planned it all out, but effort and determination could be dispelled depending on the subject. Despite disliking English and maths, Fernandez saw them as a necessity for the future. If I don't do this then I'm the one that's going to get consequences, not my teacher. She told me what to do, that's her job. My job is to finish my work (Fernandez).* Malu's older sister, currently studying at university, is an inspiration for him. *Usually she [Mum] talks to me about my career ideas after school. Then she tells me to go hard for it. So I can have a good future.*

Engaged Students

The process of owning and later driving personal learning seemed to start earlier for the engaged group. *I think probably when you start intermediate, Tamsin suggested. For Raj it was definitely the start of high school I would say. Yeah, it is such a big transition from primary and intermediate and it is, you're becoming a young adult now and you really do have to take responsibility for your own learning.* Most of this group claimed ownership of their learning on starting college but increased the intensity of that responsibility as they progressed. *Level 1, oh the teachers would probably help you more, but at Level 2 and 3 it's*

more personal (Metiria). Liliena felt that while organising and managing his studies had happened most of the time, full realisation of that ownership *just started this year. Because I sort of found myself like falling behind in studies and stuff. Yeah, I didn't want that.* Vika described his journey in terms of owning and driving his learning:

There are two main phases I've had at the school. The school's independent style of learning has been pretty good to me. Learning by yourself and just putting in the time and effort to like try and understand your material and what you are to put in the exam paper at the end of the year. Putting time and effort into that and preparing nicely for your internals, on your own, and with lots of time behind it, then that has helped. Also whenever the things got hard, learning to persevere. I felt when I have persevered within my subject then I end up understanding it at a later phase.

Bound up with what appeared to be their excitement and commitment to driving their learning was the engaged students' perceptions that school qualifications were critical in a world where qualification status is increasingly sought after and there are standards for university. The students thought that qualifications carried with them the opportunity to get a good job and would open the door to opportunities. While this recognition of perseverance was a common strand in the engaged students' comments they described other variables that forced more ownership of their learning. For Piri, it was *not passing a couple of assessments* that prompted a determination *to move on to the next test*. Conversely, implicit in Rawiri's enthusiasm for his work was sense of pride in gaining NCEA credits and succeeding. This enabled him to connect the personal picture that knowledge gave him to improving practice.

What drives my learning is achieving at a higher standard sort of thing. If I fail my self-esteem will be low, so if I aim high and keep on aiming high that drives me to learn. I drive it pretty much. My parents don't have to force me to go to school and stuff, I happily go.

Limits or Possibilities?

Disengaged Students

Every one of the nine disengaged students felt that the future offered possibilities as opposed to limits. There was a strong sense of the world beyond school in their talk, as Rewi put it, *lots of possibilities and being able to see what's out there*. However most of the group described possibilities as not necessarily being easily attainable, a perception in all likelihood influenced by their current struggles at school. Felicia rationalised the future opening out was *kind of step by step*, and Rima felt she *would rather just go with what I've got now and slowly get where I want to be*. In Waka's opinion *there are no limits. I think I should just do my hardest*. All the same, his involvement would be *only on stuff that I want*

to do. Like if someone puts something in front of me that I don't like, I'm not going to probably do it. Yeah, I won't do it.

Semi-engaged Students

About half of the semi engaged students felt that a future beyond school offered possibilities. As Rafik explained, *I think I can do a lot of things. I try not to make a barrier of, oh, I can't do that.* Eliza's comment was also typical of this view. *I think anything is possible. I'm that kind of person.* The others expressed feelings of doubt about their ability to succeed academically, with the source of their doubts related to a previous lack of academic success. This affected the way they saw possibilities for themselves in the future. Typical of this view Malu wished he could be really motivated in terms of his schoolwork. *Reflecting on those lacking times and the mistakes. And it's kind of putting me down a bit. So I was, oh, so I have to do this. Yeah. Like when I'm lazy. Yeah, it's the distractions around me.* Mereana was also ambivalent.

I think I could do anything I wanted if I put my mind to it, I just don't really. I don't know why and I don't have inspiration or motivation. But I reckon if I did have inspiration, like say one of my aunties is a big singer or something I'd be like, ooh, I want to be like her, and then I think I could do it. ... some of the people I hang out with, that I just shouldn't.

Engaged Students

Though the engaged students commented on future possibilities in their lives they were more cautious about how they expected to realise these. Their focus appeared to be more philosophical and objective than that of the previous groups. They reflected greater clarity of the whole picture; the immediate, in terms of their school planning and identified barriers to success and the collective bearing this had on future aspirations. They contextualised post-school possibilities with current performance and there was an awareness of variables. Ra had just begun to work on applying for a scholarship with a couple of his peers, with the First Foundation.

A major limit would be financial limit. That restricts a lot of stuff I do at school. Like most of the subjects I am doing either free or low cost. Like they're not like music which is quite a high cost or outdoor education, or one of the technology subjects.

Overall the engaged and semi-engaged students were more cautious about talking about possibilities in their lives, perhaps because they saw their educational successes as pivotal to those possibilities, whereas for some of the disengaged students the future and school were quite separate things.

Lifelong Learning

Most students could see the purpose and relevance of learning and how this knowledge might motivate them to become more persistent and engaged in future learning processes.

Disengaged Students

Being a lifelong learner was not a concept that many of the disengaged students had contemplated. Learning was situated in their immediate worlds and distinguishing future learning was not easy. Since many of their comments on current learning reflected a view that the quality of expected learning was compromised by a lack of motivation and their own social activity, it is possible that this also affected the way the disengaged students projected themselves ahead as learners.

I would want to learn more stuff that I don't know about, the basics, some of the basics that I missed out. I do think forward a lot but the main thing is just to make sure what happens tomorrow and today, just make sure I get through everything, but every now and then I am thinking forward. ... I just try to keep motivating myself to be the best that I can be in everything (Viliani)

For Felicia, coping with pressures and stress was not conducive to contemplating her lifelong learning. The future did not hold too many personal hopes and dreams with even her immediate wish to complete year 13, an issue of conflict.

Well my mum is telling me to get a job and help them out. Our family are kind of struggling and stuff. I've got two brothers and one sister. Oh they want me to [leave] so I can help them and stuff but I said no. Yeah, and it's like really hard.

Taken on their own some of the disengaged students' comments suggested that conscious choices about future learning had not been contemplated. Viliani did however suggest a desire to travel, while Piri also identified travel as an expected lifelong learning experience.

Semi-engaged Students

The semi-engaged student responses to becoming lifelong learners were more varied. While they were not always explicit about this, none of them articulated reservations about connecting to future choices. Keta's description of her investment in future learning was unique.

Doing something, for like giving back to the community, or to the school, because I really want to help the Māori people, because at Orua College our Māori unit is not that strong. So I want to come back and try and make a stronger Māori unit.

Most students in this group interpreted lifelong learning as a particular lifestyle, travel or career pathway, such as Fernandez. *I don't stop thinking about it. I want to travel and own a house I guess, both of them. I want a good lifestyle. Obviously everyone wants a house on the beach.* For Eliza:

I don't know if I want to settle down or if I want to travel the world. I definitely want to travel the world but I don't know when. I think I want to get my education and then become an airline assistant because I'll be doing domestic flights all the time and then I'll go international and then I'll be like everywhere so I won't have time for a relationship. But then if I come back to New Zealand and if I settle down somewhere else or what if I meet someone, I don't know. I hope married with at least two kids. I want seven. (Eliza)

Learning in the future was viewed as a positive development. Rafik's comment reflected this general optimism. Everyone learns something new, like all the time. Five years' time, hopefully I'll have a degree, ten years' time, I'll have a good job, have a good life and look back at all the years'.

Interestingly, though most of the semi-engaged students did not appear to be university focused in their immediate futures, their longer term perspectives included academia. *Five years' time I hope to be studying, yeah but maybe AUT or MIT* (Pule).

Engaged Students

The engaged students' views of lifelong learning reflected a more sophisticated understanding than those of the other groups. All members of this group considered themselves lifelong learners possibly based on the success they had experienced around their PEP at school and the private emotions evoked by that success. They referred to their previous and current personal educational planning experiences as giving them a good grounding for their futures. As Raj explained, *because you know what you want to go after, you know what your interests are.* According to Liliena, they had learned certain skills that would equip them for the future such as *managing stress*. A keen interest in lifelong learning encompassed the whole picture.

The thing is you're always learning. I would say that's generally true and your learning focus changes when you're an adult because you don't sit down in a classroom and learn most of the time. But there are points where you get bored in a job or something, you do stop learning in that area but you learn other things. And I also thought that you don't lose learning. So if you learn something it's always going to be beneficial to you. You're not going to learn something and then it just be useless to you. It's always good to have knowledge. (Tamsin)

In contrast to others in the group, Jack perceived lifelong learning as a lifestyle. *For example, I want to live on a nice big farm. I want to own a medium sized house so it's suitable for me and my wife if I get one.* The others reported a strong feeling that they would always be learners and that learning excited them. *I just want to keep on learning more things, going into uni I just want to learn more and more about how to do this and how to get there* (Liliena).

I guess never losing the passion to want to learn new things. Because education certainly doesn't stop when you leave high school, the university, you always do have opportunities to learn new things. It is something that I'm really passionate about, you should continue to try everything you can (Raj).

This awareness of the evolving nature of learning beyond school dominated their talk:

I want to make sure that what I'm doing, I'm really good at. So if there requires some further study then I don't mind. Also like revising on what I've learnt, like in my higher education, to help with my job or whatever career I take. Then that will help. Yeah, I don't mind learning new things. There's a lot of things I like beside what I study. (Vika)

Differences between Groups in Terms of the Impact of PEP

The students' comments on their efficiencies as learners and the question of whether they drove their own learning suggested that their PEP was developing and adjusting, and opportunities ahead were realisable. All students saw possibilities for their futures rather than limits and the majority in two of the groups had embraced the concept of being lifelong learners. Embedded in their reflections were references to the school's PEP systems. Most students indicated that qualifications from school or at least staying at school were important and an expectation. The value of school qualifications were bound up with their perceptions of themselves as learners within a framework of societal expectations.

Disengaged Students

While it was initially more difficult to assess the impact of PEP through the disengaged students' perspectives, their talk indicated that they were aware of what they were expected to know, understand, and be able to do, to manage their PEP effectively. An ongoing struggle however was taking ownership of their learning. While learning (and not necessarily academic learning) was viewed as an important tool for scaffolding future directions, this was tempered by personal aspirations and a lack of motivation. There was not a sense however that their parents, teachers or caregivers had a strong responsibility to make judgments and decisions for them or to tell the students what these were. Nor had the

school's PEP systems given the disengaged students a restricted and limited role to play. Quality and expected performance seemed possible, but breaking down barriers for their learning such as social distractions was viewed by the disengaged students as something that took a considerable amount of time and effort.

Semi-engaged Students

From their comments the semi-engaged students appeared to seek commitment to and understanding of the overall rationale for their PEP. Many in this group had a general understanding of their efficiencies as learners, acknowledging the importance of what they were learning and why. They equated feeling good about oneself with increased motivation and self-esteem. This often served to encourage them to engage in learning and manage their PEP. However these students seemed more worried than the disengaged students about how they were compromising the quality of expected performance with their off task behaviors. This judgment in itself is indicative of the responsibility the students took, irrespective of how efficient they were, about themselves as learners. Additionally there was a sense that driving this responsibility did not come from their parents, caregivers or teachers but was an obligation they needed to develop personally.

Engaged Students

It appeared that even though most of the engaged students would be the first in their families to attend university, they had already constructed a personal identity of graduating from school and going to university even before they had done so. Overall the emphasis the engaged students placed on their efficiencies as learners in terms of gaining qualifications, demonstrated a commitment to becoming more educated in the future and embracing lifelong learning. Many in this group openly reported personal satisfaction related to a journey of discovery about themselves as learners in charge of navigating their PEP. There was a culture that exemplified assertiveness and independence around managing their learning. They had an idea of the quality of their work. When asked to make judgements about where to next in their PEP, or what strategies or decisions might be suitable to use, the students had both evaluative and productive expertise to draw upon.

Chapter Summary

Disengaged Students' Experiences of the School's PEP Systems and Self-Reported Impacts

In any learning situation disengaged students may be present physically but lack commitment to the learning process. The circumstances that led to participation for this

group of students were making the process of PEP meaningful so that they would come to expect more of themselves than they had previously believed possible. One of the most powerful means of gaining student commitment to their PEP was providing proof of successful learning obtained through monitoring improved student progress towards identified goals. The importance of goals for student learning was reinforced on an everyday basis where students were scaffolded to collect and analyse relevant evidence of progress towards their goals at their whānau time, where they could access expert assistance from their tutor if required. A number of these students reported appreciating time spent discussing PEP and making observations about their own performance even though their families could not always make it to their HSP appointments. A close relationship with a particular tutor or learning leader often helped. The disengaged students were also responsible for monitoring their assessment data and developing an ability to use this knowledge to inform their learning. At times these practices were incentives for students to continue to enact new learning.

Though substantive external and dispositional factors seemed to impede progress, these students generally reported that organisational processes for their PEP were manageable within their practice. While an accessible framework had been established as a firm reference point for improved student outcomes, comments from the disengaged students indicated that they struggled with the idea of developing knowledge about their futures. Two competing discourses appeared to run through their comments. On the one hand they recognised the importance of accessing PEP systems and the independence and opportunities this gave them for enlarging their view of what they might do at school and beyond. This however was counteracted by their feelings of inadequacy around deep factual and conceptual knowledge, managing curricula and missing work through poor attendance. Consequently perseverance was not always evident and not as yet a feature of their practice. The disrupted and sometimes disturbed nature of distractions often took precedence.

Semi-engaged Students' Experiences of the School's PEP Systems and Self-Reported Impacts

The semi-engaged students described the school's organisational conditions of PEP as making them responsible for formulating specific goals which in turn operated as catalysts for their learning. This group of students described monitoring their data and collecting relevant evidence as a way to inquire into the effectiveness of their learning. If opportunities to learn must occur in environments characterised by trust and challenge, the semi-engaged

students indicated a readiness to engage with change and even risk associated with that change. Trust came in the form of established relationships with particular learning leaders or whānau tutors. This group did not perceive their roles in the navigation of their PEP as restricted or passive but described a heightened responsibility and awareness around their organisational learning. This responsibility they admitted even exposed less robust habits, some of which they were reluctant to address. Several competing discourses ran through the semi engaged students' talk as they described their experiences, beliefs and practices. While it was acknowledged school systems helped to scaffold them into owning effective PEP practice, this was counterbalanced by the reality of behaviours required to produce it. Many in this group admitted the ongoing influence of an active social life as detrimental to active participation. Sometimes the semi-engaged students abdicated their responsibilities and referred to a perceived resistance to allow school study and future pathways to be a priority. However, implicit in the opportunities they described as available to them was their own respect and value for their voice if they were going to make a genuine attempt to contribute to and own their PEP process.

Engaged Students' Experiences of the School's PEP Systems and Self-Reported Impacts

The engaged students also identified goals and then monitored their progress towards them. Many reported a deepening of their knowledge and refining of their skills as realisation of their future pathways beyond school emerged. In most cases these skills were self-regulatory, enabling the students to monitor and reflect on the effectiveness of changes they made to their practice and what adjustments might maximise their outcomes. The students reported on their deliberate and authentic belief in seeking feedback on their efforts to learn. Their talk suggested that this process was often not formalised or generated by a teacher, but spontaneous. The engaged students acknowledged the organisational conditions of the school's PEP systems for generating their own feedback information in regard to what had been achieved, needed improvement and where their future pathways lay. In this respect this group developed independent capabilities allowing for ongoing cycles of self-assessment. Unlike the other two groups they avoided distractions in regard to their work habits often developing frameworks that facilitated application. While it was evident that they were confident in taking ownership of their learning, the engaged students' talk acknowledged that they still had much to learn as well as accumulating further confidence and self-esteem. A key feature of their self-reported practices was the ongoing monitoring of their performance which had particular focus on the alignment and interface of their current educational plans with their future plans.

The Next Chapter

The findings from Phase 1 of the current research have been presented in Chapter 6. In the next chapter, the findings from Phase 2 are reported. Structured around the differences that are apparent between the three groups in regard to how each navigated and experienced PEP, the study will follow three students forward over the next eighteen months to see how they conduct their PEP, particularly in relationship to certain patterns of motivation and achievement. The opportunities the school provided for the students to strengthen their PEP will be compared and contrasted through the reported beliefs, understandings and practices of the students, their parents/caregivers and their teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Self -views and Practices: Sonny, Mereana and Ra

This chapter is structured to privilege the oral testimonies rather than the systems and procedures of PEP to give it direction and determine its parameters. What you might want to be when you grow up, who you might become, what kind of life you want, develop into looming realities for senior secondary school students. As they enter the first period of independence, planning the transition from school to participate in an adult world becomes a process of looking both backwards and forward.

In the current study, data from Phase 1 interviews were used to select the students to participate in Phase 2. As with Phase 1, selection was based on whether the students' articulations were consistent with the three separate categories of disengaged, semi-engaged and engaged within the survey attributes (Survey A). Survey items sought insights into students' belief in their ability to achieve academically and whether those beliefs were reflected in their approach to their schooling. The survey also sought to understand whether and to what extent students had goals for their schooling and post-school careers.

All three students who were invited to participate in Phase 2 of the research consented to be interviewed three more times. On each of these occasions they were asked to complete Survey A. Phase 2 data collection therefore comprised semi-structured interviews with students who in Chapter Five were consistently categorised as disengaged (Sonny), semi-engaged (Mereana) and engaged (Ra). The students' parents and one of their chosen learning leaders were also interviewed. In Mereana's case, despite many attempts, the researcher was unable to interview her parents. Additionally, interview data recorded without the presence of the researcher from Sonny's HSP meeting, and whānau tutor meetings with Mereana and Ra inform this chapter. Data from the student survey, completed by the three whānau tutors in 2011 and 2012, are also included. While the chapter examines students' perspectives on particular aspects of PEP discussed in both Chapters Five and Six, it is the development of students' knowledge, values and capabilities within PEP that are explored in depth as their school careers draw to an end. The ways in which they perceived themselves as learners, and were perceived by others, and the sorts of relations they developed within their school communities are also examined.

The three interviews occurred with each of the students over a period of thirteen months although with the inclusion of the Phase 1 interview, the actual tracking span was eighteen months. These semi-structured interviews were undertaken at strategic points where each student described their engagement with PEP processes and procedures within the school and elaborated on salient capabilities and practices involved. The first interview took place in November at the end of Year 12 (2011), the second interview, during Year 13, occurred in March 2012 after the previous year's official NCEA results had been made available and the new academic year was underway, and the final interviews took place in November 2012 at the completion of the students' school careers. Student-tutor interviews were recorded in May 2012, teacher interviews were undertaken at the end of 2012 and parent interviews in March 2013.

What follows in this chapter is a vignette encapsulating key moments and events in the PEP journey of each of the students. In a study that is overtly concerned with student voice, the graphs (Figures 1-6) serve to reveal the survey data and give further insight into the students' perceptions. Since the three students and their whānau tutors completed the survey on different occasions over a period of eighteen months, the practical realities of the students' daily PEP routines as well as the new challenges they might confront can be observed over time. The graphs also give opportunity to discern decisions about what stays the same and changes in the students' agency, and the manner in which they construct their PEP. Through the graphs the sometimes divergent opinions of whānau tutors are rendered visible and can be compared to those of their students. As a source of information over the length of the study the graphs also represent and justify the prominence of the students' voices which are key to making sense of the actions and practices of those involved in PEP.

It is however the interview data which provide a rich description of what is going on, including commentary from parents and key school personnel who traverse the PEP journey alongside Sonny, Mereana and Ra. Each story begins with a cameo sketch, aspects of home-school links are then presented, and possibilities for future plans are considered. The students' incremental perspectives on becoming independent, self-regulated learners both within their senior school and beyond are reported in this analysis, along with their decisions about their career and/or educational trajectories. While in summary the self-reported practices and capabilities of one student are juxtaposed against those of another in a different category, the findings have been structured to present three unique student vignettes.

Sonny

... every now and again I get off task

Sonny's mother, Hine, offers some insights into the significance of whānau and of maintaining whānau links despite physical separation. *There's me and my partner Andre and just the two boys at home. The boys' dad lives over the Shore and they have constant contact with him, so that's all good there.* Sonny's grandparents are several hours away, but Hine ensures the boys visit regularly. *They do have their lives, but I like them to still have regular visits with Mum and Dad 'cause they're getting older, so they're not going to be around much longer.* Whānau aspirations inspire Sonny to succeed at school ... *they just really want me to pass, so it helped a lot.* For Hine, though, despite his being anxious to please, there are limits. *Yeah, he wants to please people, but if he only has to do so much to get through pleasing that person then he will only do that much.*

Hine remembers her own response to schooling, how she 'hated reading' and would skim read only, or watch a movie version of a book in preference to reading. Now, however, she tries to encourage her sons. *I tried to get both of them to read books, but then in saying that, I wasn't a reader either when I was young, but now I love books.* She therefore understands Sonny's ambivalence at this stage of his life and recognises the futility of pushing him too hard. *I can only push so much,* she says.

He doesn't worry about anything. She'll be right mum. That's his attitude. He's the type of person that you need to be constantly hounding him for him to get things done.

Nonetheless she recognises that Sonny has some connection with school – that dropping out would not be an option for him. She just doesn't see him 'as that type of kid'. In his first interview Sonny also acknowledged a connection with school. *I don't know ... there's always been something that has drawn me to school, like yeah there's just something here that just makes it good.* At the same time, he was aware that his commitment to school work fluctuated. *I'm mostly engaged with the studies but every now and again I get off task. Just maturity, like I just know what times to study properly, how to do it properly instead of just slacking off for it.*

Sonny has had his share of success. Hine explains that in primary school *he won awards for everything, and I was just like, wow this is awesome.* Secondary school has been another story ... *and the moment he stepped into his high school uniform it was just across the board. I'll do what I have to do.* Hine considered by year 11 Sonny had become disengaged.

Only did what he had to do and nothing more. Just his whole attitude around school ... especially in that last term, he was hardly ever there. He found planning for assignments difficult. It will come to like the night before deadline date and I just have to rush do it ... and sometimes assignments just get thrown away.

Sonny's greatest motivation, it appears, is connected to his interest in sports and in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. These feed into his concerns about self-esteem and self-image.

Yeah. Just gym, it's always been a big thing. Go most days. Eat properly. Gym also helps a lot of believing in yourself. If you don't no one else does, that's what I say. If you think you can't lift a weight then you're not going to do it. But if you do then obviously you are like, oh wow, I can do this. But it's like a willpower thing.

For Ingrid, the Learning Leader for English:

He may be laid back but he also doesn't cope well with the pressure, especially if he feels he's not that competent at school, and so that is why he appears cruisy. ... It was that whole, if I don't try it, or if I don't turn up, then I don't have to stress about it right now.

Sonny was identified as a disengaged student by his two whānau tutors over the final two years of his senior schooling. In 2011, when in year 12 Sonny distinguished his attendance as the only regular aspect of his PEP while his tutors also noted having clear goals at school and beyond were consistent features of his schooling. In 2012 Sonny acknowledged the drop in his attendance as did his whānau tutor who also recorded that he did not have clear goals at school or in the future.

Figure 1. Sonny: Engagement survey responses

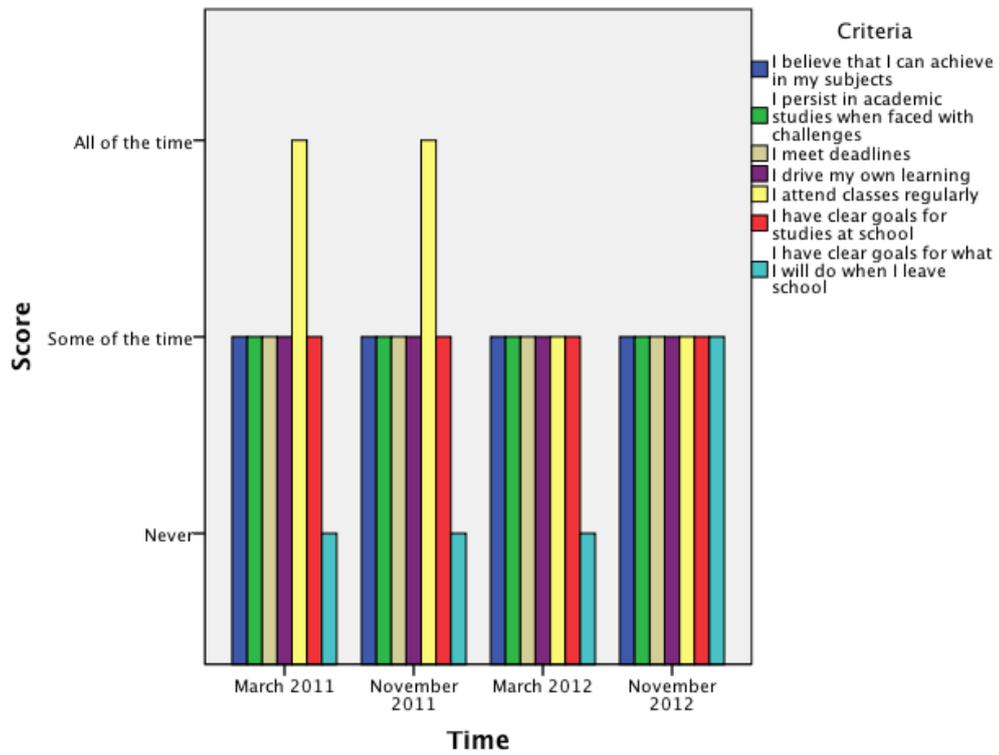
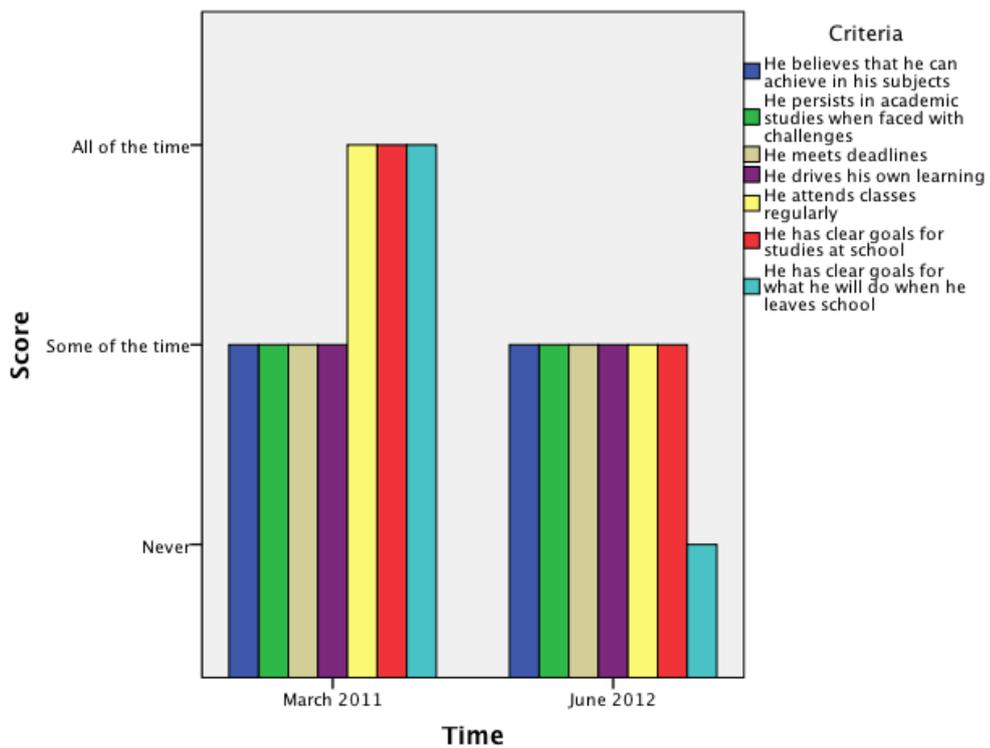


Figure 2. Sonny: Whānau Tutor engagement survey responses



PEP: I'm not a big ask for help kind of guy

As he embarked on his senior years in the school, Sonny reflected on his early secondary experiences.

I've tried not to die down this year. Like a couple of years back I went for it in the start and sort of died off down in the year and that was bad because it came to externals and I nearly flunked them. I still passed them but it was a close one. ... I guess a lot of it is just more focussed on learning, like year nine and ten were big, like just go with the flow years, a lot of it was that. But it was good. I loved it.

Despite the good intentions, Sonny found the pull of the social life compelling. Though Hine thought that Sonny had *a great bunch of friends*, and Sonny felt at the first interview that they were all *going good*, within six months it had become clear that peer relationships were coming to dominate his social world. *Most of the weekend I'm out and about. I'm like never home.* Managing school commitments had become less of a priority.

Like everyone, we all get distracted eventually, even for five minutes or the whole lesson we will all get distracted. ... Like with friends I guess you sometimes could say that you want to go for a class and they're like, oh that's too hard, do something else. They just drag me off work. Just talking. Just the usual thing. But it's not really a big thing. I can work a lot more than I can talk. So I don't usually worry about it.

For Sonny, planning was always a grey area, focused more on the here and now rather than the long term. The main goals to be met revolved around passing his subjects for NCEA, rather than developing a more holistic notion of the future. As he noted in his second interview:

Me myself I haven't really set my goals straight. Like they've all just been like, do good in this subject, in this subject – it's never been a whole sort of thing. I guess it's just uncertainty. I know where I want to go but I don't know how I'm going to get there yet or what it's going to take for me to do that. I should probably find that out soon.

To some extent, Sonny was able to select subjects that he felt he would enjoy.

I'm doing computing, hospitality and outdoor education, I think those are all of them. I just saw them in the list of classes that I could choose and I thought, I really like these subjects. I'm going to pick them. They're all good. It's more what I really enjoy, I enjoy cooking ... the meals on wheels thing ... giving to the community ... it felt sort of different because I had never really done that before.

However, Hine's subject preferences for Sonny lay elsewhere. *Maths and English, I made him do those, 'cause those to me are important. But the others, I don't even know what his other ones were. I think he had three or four.*

English had become something of a *bête noire* for Sonny at the time he was first interviewed. *I'm just sort of struggling on because I don't like ... I'm not good with writing. I can write but it's hard for me to get something out of my mind and onto paper.* Paradoxically, however, English became the stand-out in his goals, as he saw a pass in the subject as creating greater options for an uncertain future.

Probably the biggest goal I have ... just pass English. I'm not too sure what I want to do, so if I pass level two English then it will just give me a wider range of things that I could do. So it helps with jobs and stuff.

Sonny's stated resolve to pass English and his belief in its value to him on the job market remained constant, even when he reported in the second interview an early disappointment. *English I'm just really struggling at. I thought I did pretty well but then it turns out I failed the English which was the main one I needed to pass.* Hine's influence was a factor here. In an HSP meeting, she explored with Max, Sonny's Whānau Tutor, what English credits were required *to get into uni should he decide to take further study.* In a response directed at Hine rather than Sonny, Max explained.

Ah let's just bring up the university entrance requirements. It depends on what course you want to go into. So yeah at the moment his literacy, he hasn't got university entrance for literacy, he needs to get another six credits I think it is, he needs to have 10. So yeah he does need to get those literacy credits this year to get university entrance.

And, as Ingrid explained, this was the path Sonny followed:

Well his goal was to get UE literacy. It wasn't to get any more level two credits, 'cause he had level two, he just didn't have level three. And so we just looked at what was going to best meet his needs specifically and that's what he worked on.

In his final interview, Sonny acknowledged his somewhat uncharacteristic attitude to the subject, and pondered possible explanations.

Finishing subjects and stuff is definitely a big thing. A lot of people say I have a strong willpower or whatever. It helped a lot with English actually. I guess a lot of the time I was thinking I don't really want to do this, I can leave it to another time. Then I was like hang on, it's English, I have to pass English, so I just went for it.

I guess just the need to pass really has sort of given me perseverance, especially with English. English is huge. My teacher... I always thought she was a bit harsh, but then I realised she is actually a really good teacher. She makes you point out your own mistakes. So I found that really good. It was hard to find my own mistakes. I couldn't tell a thing. A lot of it was just in essay writing, punctuation placements and stuff. The second essay I wrote I basically nailed it, got a merit straight away. It

was good. It was my second merit for English. I guess when I finished my English that was just sort of like, I can do this, it's not that hard.

Ingrid adds further insights into this event in Sonny's English experience that suggests that perseverance might have been just as likely linked to Sonny's having gained some confidence through success.

He likes to get something done and then share it. He doesn't necessarily want you to look at it when it's just started. Yeah once he had the confidence ... or I talked him into letting me read it, and you know it was a nice piece. It was grounded in reality. It was about being out in the surf and nearly drowning in a rip, and even if it wasn't true ... he must be out in the surf, he must be used to that because I go out in surf and I could relate to it. So it was nice. So once he got that positive feedback that was probably at that point that he started coming in and getting on with what he needed to do.... Certainly the writing process was authentic and he really developed a really nice, creative piece that he got a merit grade for.

According to Ingrid, this was a key motivating factor for Sonny.

Certainly once we sorted out what it was he needed to do then yeah definitely. That was intrinsic motivation. Before that it was just me trying to encourage him to make things better this year than last year and meet his goals. ... I think he probably realises that he's quite a capable learner and that he knows how to learn and that he can. I think he possibly could transfer his experience with that writing to other things or possibly to other situations where he initially doesn't feel confident or doesn't initially have massive interest.

Career-wise, Sonny's enthusiasm for rugby was clear at his first interview. *Rugby's huge for me. Rugby is everything. ... I play for school now, so hopefully it takes me somewhere. Six months later he had put off signing up for a team and when he attempted to do so, it was only to find places were all filled. I couldn't get into the team this year because I was too late to sign up. ... I only asked about it last week and they've already had like four games or something so just figured a bit too late.* This did not seem to come as a surprise to Hine.

So obviously it wasn't that important to him otherwise he would have looked at it earlier, and that's Sonny for you. It's just like, God Sonny, come on! He may have this passion, but whether Sonny will actually get up and do something about that passion is a different story, and normally when he does it's too late.

Although he admitted to *not thinking forward at all*, by the time of his second interview Sonny had sought advice about the possibilities his diverse subjects might offer.

My tutor teacher has helped a lot. He's just like, well you like this and this so why don't you go for something around that area. Just about like physical education and stuff. I really want to do something around there and he said that his sister got a

Park Ranger job that I might be able to get into through Outdoor Ed. That's pretty good because she doesn't do much, just drives around the beaches. He said that Auckland Uni would probably be a good one, but just talk to the careers. I still haven't managed to do that yet. I guess I just haven't had the time really, and when I do have the time I just forget about it.

Although he saw the diversity in his subjects provided him with back-up options, he suggested that when he did meet with the careers advisors, they found the lack of cohesion less helpful.

I've told them what I'm taking and it's hard for them to decide for me because the fact that it's sporting, computing and food, they don't really mix in with each other. ... The future is still unclear. So if the rugby career fades then I suppose I'll have to have a back-up, but I don't know what that's going to be yet.

Sonny's engagement with the systems available in the school to support his PEP was uneven and shifted across time. From the outset he appreciated the consistency of staff support and the fact that they encouraged students to see possibilities from their experiences. *They have helped me a lot, like all the teachers have just been there, they support you a lot and they're just there to keep everything open for you.* When I next spoke with Sonny, though, he explained that he found it difficult to seek support. As he put it, *I'm not a big ask for help kind of guy.* Ingrid confirmed this.

Some kids will naturally demand really rigorous academic conversations because of their personality, and there will be other kids who are quiet and unless somebody actually sits with them and draws it out ... so the challenge was to turn that engagement, shape it. I don't know what he did in ILC, but it was definitely turned around at the end.

By the time of his final interview Sonny stated that he had come to find ILC a good option in terms of keeping up with his work. It was *just a huge catch up in like everything that you can do really. I have quite a bit of ILC time.*

The opportunity for students and families to access progress data through the web was another matter, however. Initially Sonny was fairly positive.

I do have gaps on things that I need to work on and yeah my parents just give me that extra motivation so it's good, because on KAMAR they have comments of how you are doing and yeah they say most of the good ones, but sometimes there are bad ones that we talk about.

With time his attitude shifted to one of total dismissal. At interview 2, Sonny explains his reluctance to view the data.

I don't really want to know how I'm going through the year. I just want to stay the same. Keep consistent work throughout the year. So half way through the year if I realise that I've passed level two, say, I don't want to slack off. So looking at the credits will sort of make me like, oh I have this amount, so I don't really need to do work.

Hine also is less than enthusiastic about using the system, despite Max's reminder of its usefulness in *things like tracking attendance, tracking results*. Her preferred option is to contact Max directly.

I've got his tutor teacher's email address and that's how I make contact now and that's actually easier than the portal. It's not difficult, I think it's just the hassle of getting into it, you know, logging on, getting into the website and having to log on to the portal and it's just ... well I hardly ever go in there.

Sonny's affirmation in the third interview: *I haven't looked on it in ages so I'm not too sure about my credits* extended to ambivalence in checking his examination results. As Hine explains:

He hasn't even logged onto the NZQA website to see what his final results are. He said, I don't know what my password is mum, and it's just ... Well how do we go about finding it? Oh yeah, I'll do it, I'll do it. ... I've got to find out how we look on line to see how many credits he does have and whether he has got entrance. I don't even know what he's got.

As Sonny prepares to leave school, Ingrid looks back:

He still doesn't know what he wants to do and that isn't unusual. ... And just looking at his progress, I would say that some of that stuff (PEP) possibly didn't work for him. He seemed to have vague ideas of what he wanted to do, but nothing definite.

And Hine looks forward.

I think once and when, hopefully soon, Sonny is ready to do something with it, then he could do a lot. If he puts his mind to it he's the kind of kid that can go out there and achieve well, and big. But it's up to Sonny to do that, and until Sonny is ready you can't really do anything.

The Future: You'll find one thing that you just want to work with for the rest of your life

In the HSP meeting between Sonny, Hine and Max mid-way through his final school year, Sonny admitted that he *wouldn't have a clue* about the number of credits he was entered for that year. He acknowledged also that teachers were fair in their online comments that he could *lose focus* and *needed to increase productivity in class and make sure* [he was] *using that time wisely*. As Max noted in their reading of Sonny's record, the biggest concern was

with *completing assessments on time and improving your organisation*. He noted also the positives that boded well for the future.

you were impressive as a leader on the trip, like surfing and sea kayaking, you've got good skills, you showed good leadership and you've got a good appreciation for the environment. So that's good, like in terms of physical stuff and actually doing the outdoor ed stuff you're going really well.

In his final interview, Sonny ponders on his future:

Personal trainers come up a lot. I'm not too sure if I want to do that, but yeah. Teacher, even a teacher, I wouldn't mind being a teacher... but a bit later on in life. I guess like I said you just go over what you do. You'll find one thing that you just want to work with for the rest of your life really. For me that's PE of course, I love it, so I just stuck with it and nothing has really changed my mind about it since.

Hine believes Sonny has many options and sees his uncertainty as an issue of both confidence and motivation.

You know, he just lacks motivation. Just the other day, I think he was talking to his friends and he was telling me, he was sort of saying, you know, why commit to something? I'm only 18, I'm still young – which is true. I got plenty of time to commit to whatever it is. Like whether it be a course or a job, whatever. I think Sonny just wants to be Sonny for as long as he possibly can, you know, no responsibility. And then probably one day he's just going to go, okay it's time now, and I think that's him. And that's sort of why I'm not pushing him into anything just yet 'cause the last thing he wants is me harping on about something and then pushing him into a subject with student loans and things like that on something he just doesn't want to do. There's no point in doing that. You can show him all these things, 'cause like I said there's that Camp America, there's Uni if he wants to, there's the Tech if he wants to. There's so many options out there. It's just up to him to actually go out and do it.

There are expectations, though.

He's having a gap year. I wasn't going to let him sit at home, so we managed to get him a job here in the Warehouse. It's something. Obviously it won't be a career choice, but something for now is better than sitting at home twiddling your thumbs sort of thing. Hopefully he decides what he wants to do this year and moving forward next year starts a course or whatever.

Ingrid concludes that *he was reasonably successful. He got what he needed to get*. So what is success for Sonny and what has school meant for him along the way?

A lot of people, like I've talked to a lot of Year 13s and they are like, oh I'm scared about next year. I'm just like ... it had to happen sooner or later. You can't hide from it. I guess the maturity thing sort of stepped up, but other than that I'd say I'm

the same person. I guess just a lot of people kind of tell you to go different ways and then I'm just like, I don't really want to do that, I don't see the point, so I might as well work to what I want to be. A few of them are like, oh I wish I had one more year. That's the same with me. I wish I had one more year. I love it here.

Mereana

They are this far apart standing behind me

Difficult circumstances in Mereana's whānau have left her grappling for an identity as a learner. In the early phases of her secondary school career she seeks to match the lifestyle of her father's whānau. *I wanted to be that little gangster girl. I thought that lifestyle was cool back then.* Now the aim of a responsible future becomes her challenge as she makes decisions in her new school environment.

I just grew up and talked with my mum and talked with my dad and my dad's family is just all real gangster and then I just look at them and I don't want to be like that. I want to actually make it.

Observing her cousins who all have children gives Mereana further resolve. *They're just on the benny and they're not even 20. They have no job, they have no life really, you've got to have something to support your children with.*

Education provides a chance for Mereana to make changes to her life. She is also motivated by her desire to be a role model for the rest of the family.

My little cousins, 13, don't go to school. Smoke, drink ... I just tell them you know be like me, be like me. 'No cuz, we're going to be on the benny' dah, dah, dah. I'm like, it's sad. It's sad to see them like that and I just think if I can make some kind of window for them to see where I am doing good then maybe they will want to follow.

Issues with Mereana's boyfriend of four years, also from a gang family, further reinforce her attitude towards influencing others positively.

He left school at Year 8, he is now 18 this year he had real bad anger problems, everything, he is ADHD. All he needs is someone to give him a chance at something he is good at. ... Last week, this was his last week before his trial and he is doing good.

At times her need to direct her energy into school is at odds with Mereana's loyalty to her whānau.

they all come from violent backgrounds as well and they just drink and smoke and when I'm there, like say my aunty, she's got eight kids and one on the way, she just smokes, drinks and every time I'm there I just run and grab babies, chuck them in

the bath, feed them, put them to sleep, play with them whatever while she's inside with all these other people just drinking away.

Rebecca, Mereana's Learning Leader for History explains this conflict.

I know she's felt responsible for certain people in her life and she's felt that they have to come first, not her studies and that when they need her she's off school and stuff like that and also I know that now, for example, I know her focus was really on finding a job like straight away. ... Like she wanted to be earning money and be someone that was contributing to the family.

Mereana recalls her first impressions of her new school. *I didn't see one kid out of uniform, like or friends. I've never been to a school where everybody just gets along.* She finds the school a place into which she can begin to invest of herself, while at the same time recognising that she has a part to play in this. *The school has helped me in like saying, giving me options of what I want to do. But I think it's just myself, like if I don't want to do something I'm not going to do it.*

It wasn't always easy to be Mereana's teacher as Rebecca remembers. *First of all I found her very disengaged in Year 9 so I'm just kind of looking at it over a five year period. So I found her, to be really blunt, I found her a real pain in Year 9.* In her second interview Mereana identifies the trap of her earlier choices.

I have been through it all, the naughty path, I chose the wrong way to go but I turned it around still being in school without being kicked out yet, and I don't want like students from here going the same way I did because it is no good and I just tell them, what are you fighting for?

However a change in attitude towards school does not guarantee an easy solution. *It (school) challenges me alright. I don't find any school work easy. Like I think I'm more like my dad, like you know, school just isn't for me. I would rather be out there doing something, moving around, getting outside.*

While Mereana is personally motivated there are limits to her levels of engagement with her studies as she explained in her first interview. *Some things like we do during the day it just doesn't interest me. I'd rather just sit there and just look out the window or go walk around and not even go to class. ... It's just me.* Building relationships with her teachers seems to connect Mereana progressively closer to school. Rebecca notes:

Like she would come in, be nice because she'd established relationships and she knew teachers and stuff. Like she wasn't there to cause trouble but she wasn't really there to do lots of work either but she was obviously quite a smart cookie.

A contract with the school and her mother sees an emerging commitment to attend and give up ‘all those little mischief things’. Taking more responsibility for her outcomes Mereana notices shift in her engagement though years 11 and 12.

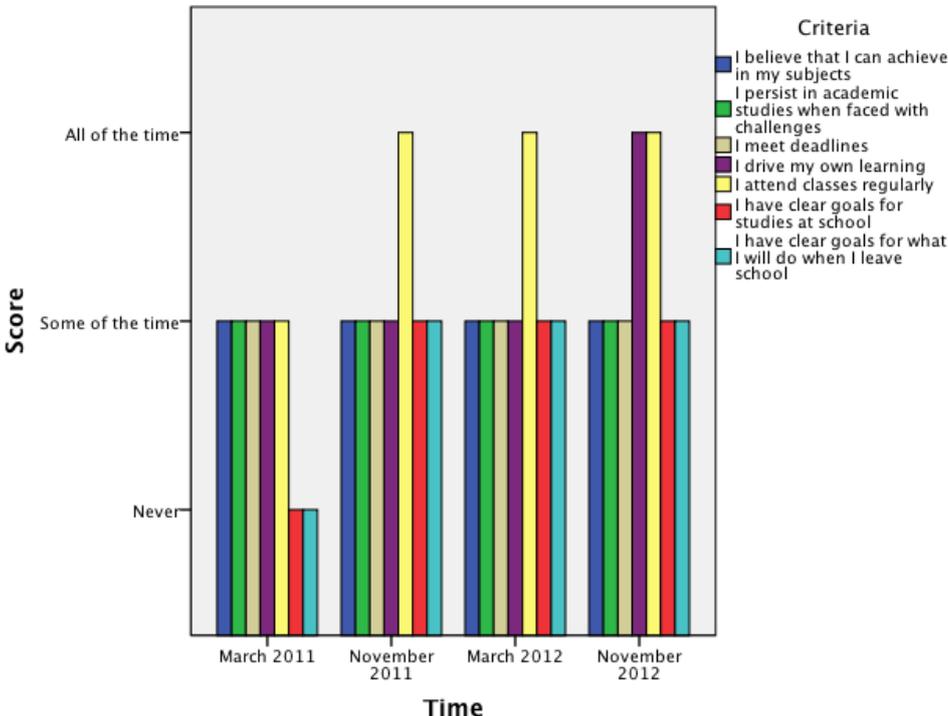
Well I find that I’m in class more and that I’m actually turning up to school on time. And actually wanting to be here ... just looking at my family and how they are, and I don’t want to be like them ... make mum and dad proud.

With this comes a greater awareness of pressures and expectations she needs to rise to.

Life is hard, it’s not easy. Everyone is like, what do you want to do after school da-da-da, do you think this is good for you? Which is all very good and helpful and everything. ... I feel I am in charge of myself. At the end of the day the results will come out of what I’ve put in.

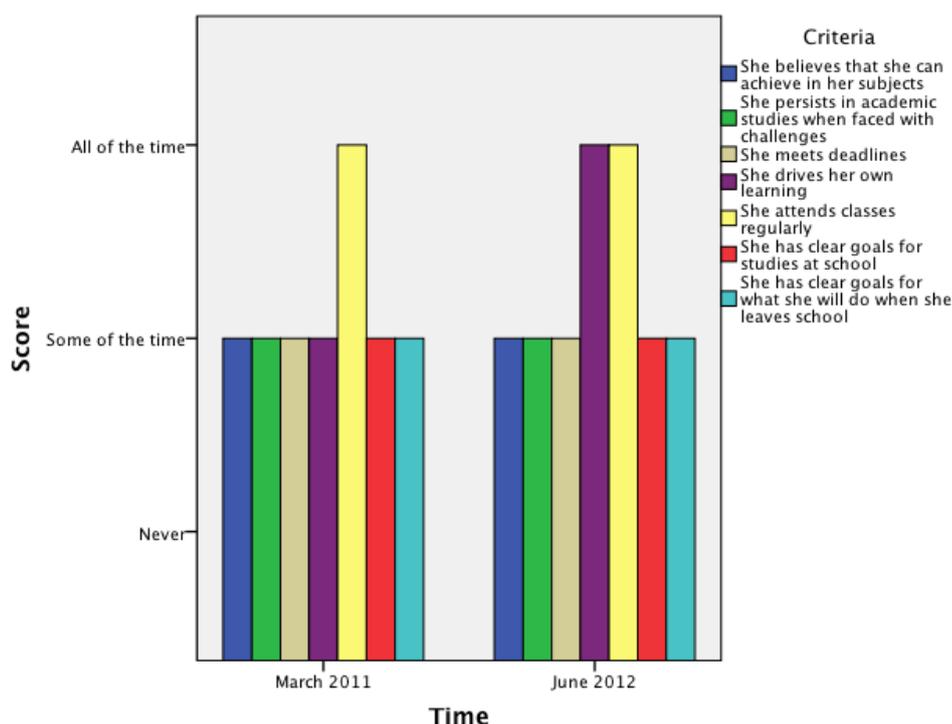
Mereana was identified as a semi-engaged student by her whānau tutor throughout the last two years of her senior schooling. Both Mereana and her whānau tutor identified regular attendance over 2011 and 2012 as a feature of her PEP, while additionally her tutor found that she drove her learning consistently in her final school year.

Figure 3. Mereana: Engagement survey responses



Note: Scale values for the last two criteria are: "Very clear", "Not very clear", "Unclear"

Figure 4. Mereana: Whānau Tutor engagement survey responses



Note: Scale values for the last two criteria are: "Very clear", "Not very clear", "Unclear"

PEP: ... my mum's happy, my teachers are happy and then like I'm happy.

Mereana's subject preferences had strong links to her identity as Māori.

We are doing Māori history this year as topic. It's cool. It's interesting because we are have a mixture of cultures in our class and they all have their own opinions but at the end of the day it was Māori versus Pakeha and that's in class too, the Māori versus the Pakeha and it's interesting to hear everybody's different perspective. Yesterday, we had a big argument about the Māori and Pakeha and how Pakeha came and took our land. I said the Indians what do youse think on this since your country has not been taken over. Everyone was in my face – India was taken over too, Britain took over India. You can't tell me more British people are living in India than there is Indians. They real just jump to conclusions instead of thinking outside the box. Sometimes it makes me hoha, you know me being Māori, it's annoying.

Rebecca commented on Mereana's engagement with the Treaty of Waitangi. *Yeah she loved that. Like she used to come in independent learning time (ILC) and borrow the books and take them away.* Difficulties only arose where her lack of grounding in the discipline caused problems for the assessment objectives. *She did go off the boil with it once the assessment started and that was I think because they were so research based and like she hadn't done history before.* Nonetheless Mereana is determined to focus on exams to gain more credits. In her first interview her goal was *to actually turn up. And try my best [aware that] I need 11 more* (for level 2). Six months later her goals are changing to become more focused around

PEP for the longer term. *All I want to do is pass my Level 2 and 3. I think I wanted to leave at an early age and I am still here and I just want my background qualifications.* Responses to family influences *why don't you just get a job, why don't you just do this, why don't you do that*, reflected Mereana's main focus. *You just leave me to what I want to do. My main thing was finish school and be the first in my family and to make my mum proud.*

This shift in focus and commitment to school delivered some bonuses. After the usual negative phone calls from the school DPs or from the truancy officer, Mereana's more positive approach signalled changes. *Mereana has done really good in school and really good in class and Mum is like 'what youse are finally ringing me on something my daughter is doing good!'* The experience of school also changed for Mereana. *And actually usually school drags and drags and my next week is the holidays and I'm like what? It went fast.*

Further rewards for perseverance came in the form of improved relationships with her whānau tutor and learning leaders. Evident pride in her achievement was reinforced through her relationship with her whānau tutor:

I ask her every Tuesday ... I go to her class and ask for my credits. When I see how much I've achieved and how much I haven't, it makes me want to fill that whole thing up. ... [The whānau tutor asks] what would I rather do than sit at home, 10 kids, no job, wondering how I'm going to put the dinner on the table for all my kids, dah, dah, dah. Whereas I could put my head down now and go farer and have a good life, get a good job.

Mereana constantly reflected on her *disgusting behaviour back then. I reckon I broke out of it maybe end of Year 11*, she says, *but when I started Year 12 there was certain things people can get me on, certain things that I can't let go.* Her past was an ongoing touchstone as if she had to keep reminding herself of her current and future focus. *I was always in the Principal's office for something I've done wrong and this year I haven't been there once. I plan to keep it that way.* Making a behavioural and academic turn around was a struggle and she found support in her teachers:

Some of the teachers in the school are real awesome and will listen to what I have to say. My PCF teacher from last year she would just let me talk, let me talk, then she would explain to me how teachers work, why they say stuff like this.

Mereana had had a difficult relationship with her ECE teacher from the previous year where there were meetings and emails with her mother resulting in Mereana being sent from the class:

I just came back into class. I said I'm sorry for last year and how I was, how I was a little egg and everything and if she wants me back in the class you know I will be there and I will try. She said okay then. And then look at it now, and I've passed everything this year in her class.

Although it is not until year 12 that she is able to 'normalise' her school work, by that time she doesn't have 'a favourite subject'. *I think it's just cause, you know, I've been doing them for so long, it's just I know what I am going to do. ... Everything is just normal.* Nonetheless, it remains Mereana's view that *teachers have the most impact on why students do go to class.*

Rebecca elaborates on the value placed on the student-teacher relationship and the emphasis the school placed on reciprocity. The principal initiated an opportunity to express this mutual relationship by providing students a chance to write a personal acknowledgement to a teacher at morning briefing:

I remember thinking it will probably be someone from my tutor group that comes in and says you know thank you for being a tutor teacher. And then I see Mereana standing there and I was thinking, what's Mereana doing here? She must have a message to run for someone because Mereana would be the last person you would imagine to even want to do something like this. And then she goes, Oh Miss, I've got something for you. And she had this little certificate that said to Miss I've still got it. I just want to thank you for always being there, it said, caring for me. Which I thought was really nice, but then it said, making sure I'm focused on my learning or something, like it was both. She kind of got it as both as well, which I thought was really nice. It wasn't just thank you for caring about me or whatever, it was a thank you for keeping me going on my learning. So I thought that she did see that kind of care isn't just about caring, it's about wanting someone to do well as well. Then she said, Miss, I want you to laminate it and put it on your wall, and I went, oh cool! I will then, because she was quite proud of that too, of being asked if she wanted to give one to somebody.

The HSP meetings had been something of a wake-up call for Mereana where things going on for her at school were brought out in the open.

"Oh, your attendance is only 60 something percent." I just look at my mum and she's just giving me, Oh, you better wait eh! She's giving me those eyes ... then the look. It makes me feel stink. And I have to go home and tell my dad ... who I am his only child ... then the look on my dad's face, it makes me feel stink. ... I don't think it's so much school that has influenced me to stay here this long, it's my family. I think my whole life impacts on my family.

As Mereana makes incremental progress with her PEP her enthusiasm for her family's participation in the HSP is heightened. Learning about Mereana's progress had a flow on effect for her mother.

Like she was hearing it straight from my teacher and that was helpful... it will just boost my mum up to think I am doing good in school. That helps me because my mum's happy, my teachers are happy and then like I'm happy. Yeah and then I can do it.

However attending any school event for Mereana's father was challenging given his own negative schooling experiences and his anticipation about what the teachers might say about his daughter. His last parent interview was at pre-school (Kohanga).

I said, oh Dad, I've got a meeting on so and so, such and such time, and he goes, and what? And I go, well can you come please? I am year 13, you've been telling me to stay in school. Don't be a hypocrite, you can come to one of my meetings. I'm sure you can leave work to come to one of my meetings. He's like, Oh, you know, dah, dah, dah ... mumbling away. And I go, no! I just told him. I was like, you're coming to my meeting! And he goes, oh, what time is it? I told him the time. I think it was 6.30, 7.00. And I said, I'll see you at this time and if you are not there I am going to be angry at you and don't ring me and ever talk to me again. And he just goes, oh babe, don't be like that. I go, bye. And then he texted me ... I think it was half an hour before the meeting and he goes, where are you? I'm coming. And then I just looked at my boyfriend and I was like, dad's coming to pick me up for my meeting! We got here and he's like, What do I say? He's never been to a meeting before. He says what do I say? What does this mean? Miss... told him, she's just passed level two. My dad said, what's that? He doesn't know that kind of stuff towards school. He dropped out at third form I think to play rugby. But yeah, when he came he looked around my class and he just saw the way I was with my teacher. Like she offered me a career in drama because I like to act and I am all dramatic and everything. She is like you like to act, and I'm like, do I what!? to my dad. And he just goes, oh, does she what alright! My dad sat there and he kind of had to ask questions of what my teacher was talking about because he didn't even know himself. But he said, by the sounds of it all it sounds like I'm doing good ... from what he used to hear about me.

Although things at school are going well for Mereana, application and using her time well remain a trial. In her first interview she was using her independent learning time in what she considered an adequate way *four times a week ... cause I'm passing*. By the third interview the benefits of ILC had waned. *ILC is to catch up on my work and everything. I know what I am supposed to be doing, but I just, I don't know, just don't do it*. This recognition of her lack of motivation is reflected in her lack of confidence in facing written exams in particular, and in her preference for oral assessment. When she failed an assessment *it made*

me feel like that I mustn't be paying enough attention in class ... but at least I turned up and made an effort. I'm not confident in learning. If I can speak, talk, show, you know, yeah I can do it. Persevering with aspects of her assessment could be difficult. As Rebecca reports *she did come and she was quite interested in the learning and she really got into debating this and that and the other and we had like really good discussions but it didn't follow through.* Intentions were not always acted upon when it came to assignments which she failed to complete. *She had it with her for ages and carried it around and did bits of it and then it never came to fruition (Rebecca).*

Nonetheless, Mereana's personal motivation to complete school for her family and be a role model endures. *They are this far apart standing behind me,* she says. Her personal relationship with her boyfriend adds further impetus. *And he sees that he's met me and I'm at school, and I can do it. So he's pushing me because his chance has gone and I think, I think that he thinks his last chance is in me.*

There was a recognition that Mereana's peers could influence her ability to be a self-regulated learner. *If they're unmotivated then it's a distraction. I'm easily distracted. If no one else is talking and I just see everybody doing their work, so I just put my head down and do my work too.* Her love of history, especially Māori history was an important catalyst for engagement. *I can sit there and just listen and write and write.* However wanting to be more self-regulated in her learning and applying this to her studies could be different things.

I think I have been challenged throughout all my school years but sometimes when the going gets tough I don't want to do it because I think I can't. To be honest I will just sit there and I can read the same line 10 times and it still won't be in my head. I just get frustrated and then I just go up and, Sir, can I go for a drink please? And I have a drink and I come back and sit down again and reread it and keep trying to have a go at it.

Mereana applied some restrictions to owning her learning which continued through year 13. *School is like the work area. Home, I just want to do what I do.*

Mereana recalls responding negatively to poor treatment and low expectations.

When I used to take English my English teacher goes to me ... oh, cause in level one, year 11, I passed literacy ... and I was like, oh Miss, can I check my credits? And she goes oh, oh, I don't know how you passed level 1. That's how she said it. You passed level one like that! And I just looked at her and I swore at her and I just walked out. And that's when she got the DPs in. Because I thought that was rude.

Like, I'm not going to let her speak to me like that, like I'm dumb. See and people like that is the reason why I wanted to leave school in the first place.

Nonetheless, ongoing school support for Mereana through regular positive phone calls home, were making a difference. *I am going home with certificates for first in class, going home with certificates for leadership and character and stuff and Mum's like, you're just changed.* This has led to a belief in herself. Reinforcement from home helps her growing self-efficacy, which has various sources, as Mereana explains.

My teachers obviously. Kids at school. If they can do it I can do it. My mum.

Rebecca gives further insight. *I do think she has a strong sense of self-belief but I also think she's got a strong sense of responsibility for others as well which can kind of over-ride that sometimes.*

The Future: I don't see the point in being flash. Because most flash people are just stuck up.

In terms of Mereana's career and educational trajectory beyond school she still has little idea about what she wants to do by her third interview. *I am not prepared for the future to be honest. I don't know what I am going to do. My first goal was to finish school and then my goal after that was to work full time.* She has made an effort to pursue support through Gateway, a branch of careers. *I ask them about careers and jobs. They asked me what I'd like to do but you know nothing excites me. Everything they have in there I just see and I am like nah.* In a retail company for work experience, 'The Warehouse' Mereana is offered a part-time job which she tries for a short while. Though there is indecision about what she wants to do there is also discernment.

There's limits. I can only go so far... because I can only take so much and do it for so long. I get bored easy, which is pretty stink. ... Cause when I worked in clothing at the Warehouse, I was just getting told what to do all day long. I know I'm going to be told what to do all my life, but I am too young to be there. I can go out and attract a different job, I think they (the school) have helped me within my education, have helped me be the person I am today with a positive attitude. One because I wanted it, and two because they were there to back it up.

While Mereana has hopes to please her whānau in her transition from school she also restrains their expectations through a view of her 'appropriate place'.

Like my mum says you are going to Uni, and my aunts and uncles ask me about uni and I'm like no 13 years of school and I'm done. I'm finished. My attitude towards university going on after school is, I don't want a really flash job and I don't want

all the flash things, I just want a decent house, I don't see the point in being flash. Because most flash people are just stuck up.

Mereana is however focused on an upcoming interview and prepared to undergo preliminary screening assessments.

New Zealand Post, I got four assessments to sit on Thursday and I'm shaking because I don't like assessments and I can't do them. But yeah I'm going to do it. I'm going to go to that and I want to get my license

Recognition that the future is more than a career, and wisdom about the nature of how a life is lived, are both very apparent in Mereana's final interview comments as she looks back on her past. *School is pretty alright ... I think, I couldn't ask for better for where I am now. I think that from where I was to where I am now, that's pretty good. I've done something good there.* Moreover, living through her new found secondary school persona was important. *Now I think nah I'm going to get into trouble if I do that, cause I am nearly legal, if I do something wrong, you know, that's my life gone really.* Avoiding the snares she had herself experienced was something she wanted to pass on.

She's awesome my little sister. I told her go to uni after college. I don't want to go to uni, dah, dah, dah, I just told her, I sat her down and I said if I had your brain I would want to go, don't waste it, because then you'll be like me. She's like, what do you mean you'll be like me? I'm like, don't get into trouble, you know, just use your brain while you've got it. Don't do drugs and set it all off.

Rebecca's insights on Mereana's progress with her PEP are quite closely aligned with those of her student:

I think that the school that she's been in and the relationships she's had with school has been positive but I just don't think it's fully come to fruition yet. I just think it's going to take a few more years. I think later on down the track she'll find something that she wants enough to put herself out for. I actually think Mereana has made a lot of progress coming through the school but ... and she was really proud at finishing school and she was incredibly proud of getting her award at the prize giving and stuff. Like things when the old Mereana that I knew when she first came wouldn't have given two hoots about. ... If it was somebody that was a bit less able than Mereana academically I'd just be totally celebrating how far they'd come, but because Mereana could achieve higher I think ... but we both [Rebecca plus the Whānau Leader] feel she hasn't reached that potential but she is young and there's been things holding her back. She has managed the pathways but I would like to see her go even higher. Like she could go onto university, that kind of thing. She doesn't really see that about herself yet. Well she believes that she can achieve but I think she might put a cap on it. You know what I mean. I think she might see it just in certain trajectories and not others at the moment. She does believe she can succeed.

With traditional values still holding store, Mereana could look at the future through the lens of a learner, but not without the transition from school being bitter sweet.

I think every day I learn something new. I don't know what it is, but eventually it will show. In five years' time, how old will I be, 21. I won't have kids cause I want to make my 21st cause then I won't have my key if I have kids before my 21st. I'm going to be living in Australia. I want to be already over there for at least three or four years. ... I don't want to leave [school] ... I don't know. I'm going to miss it I reckon. ... I'll probably still be here because my sister is going to be here you know. I'm bringing her in for the first day next year. Actually I feel happy and sad. Sad reason because it's my last year of school. It's like I'm not going to wake up and know what I'm going to do, like put my uniform on. Wednesday is going to be the last day I put my uniform on. Then there's going to be no books, no seeing my friends at school every day. Everything I do that I don't like now I'm going to miss, I know I will miss. Everything. Like the teachers, the growling's, the rewards. My mates, the food, the café, I'll miss the café. I'll even miss the growling's. I think I'll miss it all. But I'm happy because I made it.

Ra

It's just that how you approach the work is how you end up making it seem less stressful

Ra is a highly motivated learner who knows what he is doing with his life and where he wants to go. The second eldest in a family of five, *home definitely plays a major part in my decisions*. Ra negotiates important resources to his learning such as home access to the internet. After his first interview while he was awaiting his Level 2 NCEA exam results he *went to the library basically every day to check*. Despite gaining access to the internet at home for a short period in his final year at school, it was soon cut off. *My mum said that we had definitely planned to get it on ... but after the credit check she was declined*.

Pale, Ra's Dad, recognising that he is unable to support extracurricular opportunities, is very committed to making a better life for his five children so that through their hard work in gaining a good education, they are able to access the global opportunities.

we couldn't get him into a lot of extracurricular. One was mostly cost, two was getting him to those extracurricular activities. But he took it on the chin really. He wouldn't let it get him down. He would just try and do everything he could, right from when he first started school.

Culturally Ra reflected his own parents' ease in their culture. Respect for elders had been a part of his upbringing as well as respect for other cultures and religions. *Regardless of who they are and what they do I have always shown my respect to elders*. Having friends from other cultures meant *my respect is further heightened I guess, by understanding their*

different cultural backgrounds and what their parents do and stuff like that and how they are, have enforced their expectations on their kids sometimes. Ra also liked listening to international music

I play some of them at home and they are like what's the point of listening to this, you can't understand what they are saying. And I'm like that's not the point. That's the main barrier for like appreciating other cultures. Language isn't the only way to connect cultures

Pale sees benefits and challenges through growing up with his children:

We always tell the kids that we work hard to do what we're doing so that you don't have to live how we lived. We want you to live a better life. We want you to get yourself educated, see the world and not get, well not so much get tied down so young. I guess that's every parent's dream that you wish that for your children. And we always have said to them we never regret having you as young as we did. We were very fortunate, 'cause we got to grow up with our children, so we are a lot more mates. We've had our challenging times but the kids know how hard it's been. ... There's nothing to stop you except yourselves. And yes, school may be hard now, but you step outside into the real world, that's when you see why your teachers were hard on you, your mum and dad were hard on you. You've got to work hard. When life is handed to people on a silver platter, they want for nothing. When you are a child that comes from nothing you want to get everything. So you have got to push yourself. You've got to work hard. And you get knocked back, but that's where you learn is after you have been knocked back. Just letting them know that if they prefer to take this route, you don't get to own your own house. If you go the route that your mum and I are trying to push you towards, you will get to own all those things first, have security and everything else and have a fully functioned brain to your disposal and then you can just do whatever.

Maia, Ra's Mum, describes Ra as

a very good listener and he doesn't seem to fuss as much as the rest. He'll take whatever he's got. If he's only got crayon to do his homework, he will use a crayon and just sharpen it up somehow to get a fine point out of it. You make the most of what you have. He's done really well. I just think that, you know, like he knows that he still has weaknesses he needs to work on.

The importance of education wasn't acknowledged within Maia's family, but like Ra, Maia was driven in her learning.

It seems for me growing up they frowned upon me educating myself. I got criticised a lot growing up. ... You think you are better than us, that's why your nose is in the books all the time. You are ashamed of us, that's why you want to get educated and get away from us. And I just kept saying, whatever, whatever, whatever... And it was only because I enjoyed school. ... I think it's still out there.

Katie, Ra's Spanish Teacher, observes that for Ra *sometimes what goes on around him at home, it's not necessarily extreme or bad. It's just even noise levels or having actual study space or having to look after somebody else.*

Ra looks ahead to his final year at school. *I've now got to balance work commitments, school commitments and extracurricular activities. Definitely stepping up.* As far as workload is concerned Ra gives consideration to his approach in the future:

I'm feeling that there will be more work at university. I feel to some extent there's no point worrying about how much work you are going to get. It's just that how you approach the work is how you end up making it seem less stressful.

Ra compares his schooling to that of a friend:

She goes to School Y out west where her school timetable and their learning systems are way different than ours. They are definitely your traditional old fashioned high schools where you have all classes in one day in 50 minute periods and stuff, and we used to swap and exchange what our timetables were. And she was, oh my God. 100 minutes for this, that seems almost too long, would you get bored? And I'm thinking to myself, you wouldn't have enough time to do your work in 50 minutes, are you kidding me?

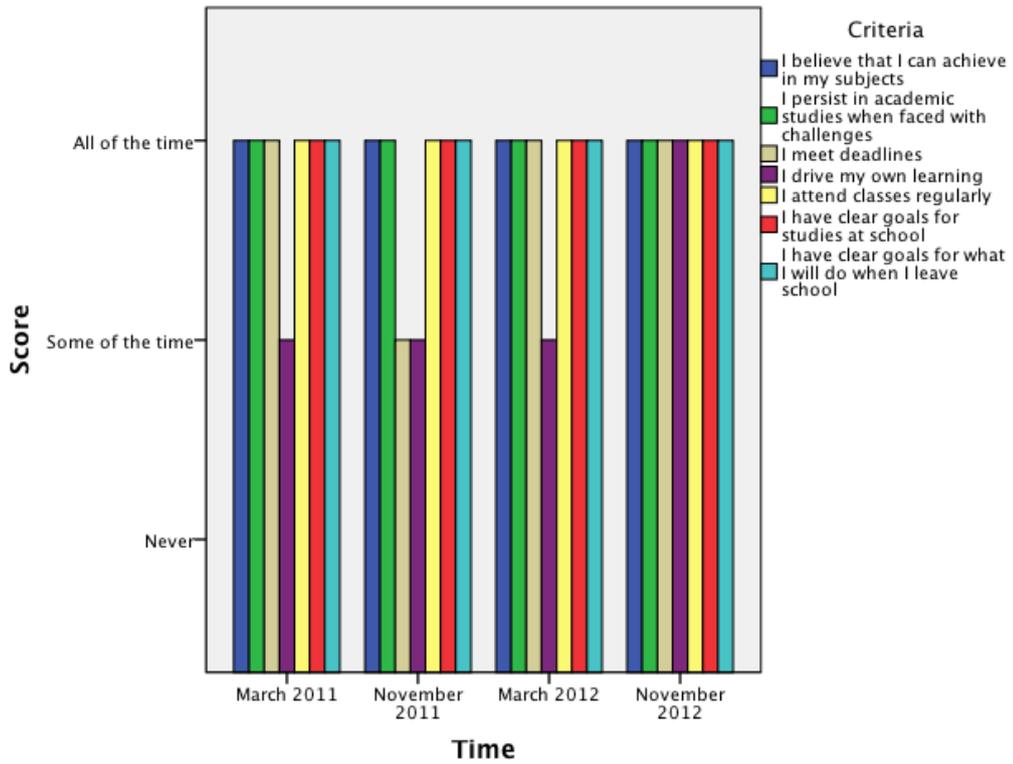
Maia recognises that the school has put in place a really good foundation for him to build on. *I am quite a biased parent. ... I like pretty much everything the school does with the learners or the students, and what they do with engaging parents.*

Ra's determination to forge a successful educational pathway also drew from what he had learned through his older brother's experience of dropping out of school:

He only had, you know he still had half the year left where he could have picked it back up again. ... Stay in school. It's very important, it's the foundation of your future, so why stop now when you're so close. Just thinking, he's always been there, just a couple of years in front ... bright ... but in our own pathways, and respected ourselves for that. Yes, that's why I've carried that with me, especially during exams. Year 11, because that's when he left, he's two years older than me, and I thought to myself I can't afford to do that. I can do so much. So basically from year 11, so the beginning of doing exams and things, I've actually developed a sense of ... I can't afford to take a day off school because I am feeling tired, because that's what my brother used to do a lot.

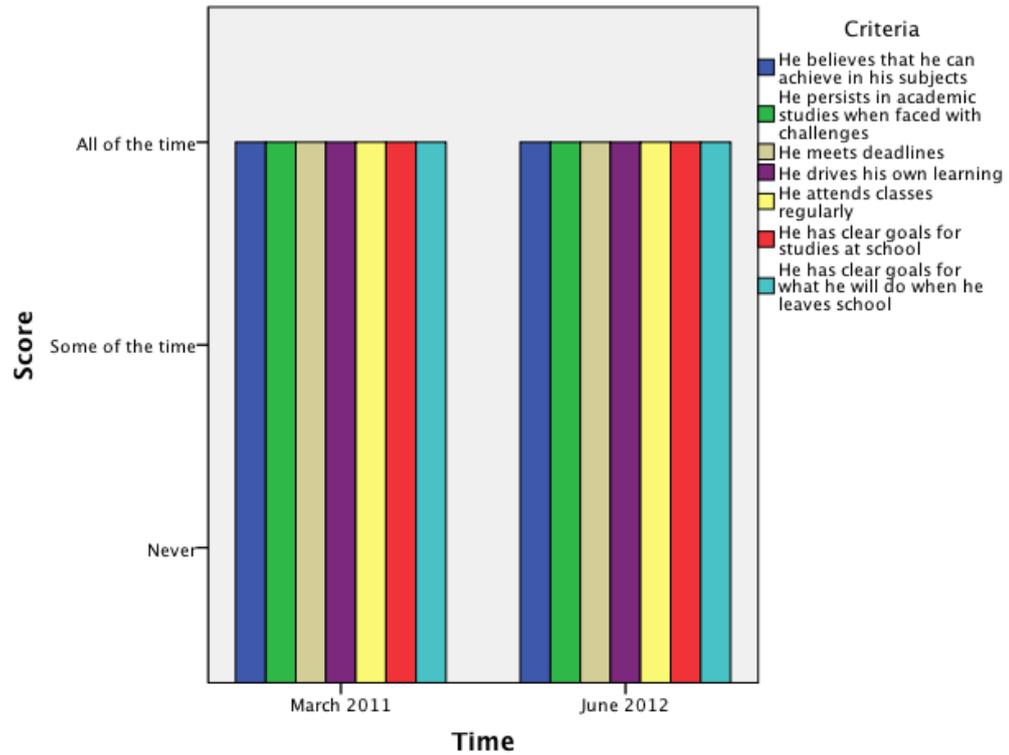
Both Ra and his whānau tutor identify him as a fully engaged student, with just Ra having some doubts initially about consistently meeting deadlines and driving his learning.

Figure 5. Ra: Engagement survey responses



Note: Scale values for the last two criteria are: "Very clear", "Not very clear", "Unclear"

Figure 6. Ra: Whānau Tutor engagement survey responses



Note: Scale values for the last two criteria are: "Very clear", "Not very clear", "Unclear"

PEP: There's only so much the school can do and basically ... it's all up to me

Pale felt his second son embraced all the school could offer. *So them nurturing all his gifts and him realising he has a lot of potential, he pretty much took it with both hands. Choosing a subject like Spanish was for Ra the new thing since I started high school. He found it a lot different just to every other subject that I am doing. So actually finding out that you can do another language at high school is like, oh my goodness, that's incredible.* The school had organised a trip to Spain but fundraising just could not cover Ra's fare.

and you know, not having that opportunity at that point in time was a bit heart-breaking and, yeah I did cry, but on the next day, on the Saturday, we had a call at home. Mum picks it up, it's from (the principal) and she said these people, these generous people have decided to pay for my trip. I woke up and she hit me with the news and I was like, oh my goodness. Are you kidding me? So that week following after the news I actually met them and, oh my goodness, thank you very much. They were like: Yes we definitely like you to go. Because they are regular travellers.

Learning they were parents of another student in the school, Ra recollects: *like when we had our ILC class we had our big events like the restaurant nights and stuff and I would see her at all of them and it all came rushing back and I was even more grateful.*

Ra's apprehension about the trip was initially evident:

So when I went to Spain, the flight there, even though I was checking in my bags I was so nervous that I wanted to faint. Check my bags in for me, walking across that big line. It was scary. But after, on the plane, everyone was like ... oh you're going to be okay on the plane, it's going to be very scary. It's like I'll be fine. When the plane left it was like, oh yeah we're off the ground!

Katie describes the experience of the trip and its impact on Ra:

It just narrowed everything down even more, and the outlook for him was more like a tunnel vision now, it was fabulous. And that opened his eyes to the world ridiculously, I just don't think he had really imagined it. Yeah we watched video clips and we looked at photographs, but it's not actually the same, and I think just, he was just one of the ones that came out of the Metro in the airport and was suddenly in the middle of Madrid with the old architecture and the busy cars and the people everywhere and the signs all in Spanish, and I think it just kind of really sparked something in him. And then when he was able to actually communicate and get what he wanted, so hold those conversations in Spanish, so what he had been learning in his little classroom in the little country of New Zealand was actually a life skill I think. He just thought actually I don't have to stay in Auckland if I don't want to. I don't have to stay where I've come from. I can go and come back. It just made it more possible for him I think. Because there was a lot of effort and a lot of

trauma getting the money together for him to be able to go But I think the act of going made it something very real for the future for him as well.

Maia reported on Ra's motivation after the trip, *Mum I want to go travel more.*

Doing well at school was an unremitting goal for Ra, but high expectations brought stress in Spanish. Katie gives some insight into one result where her ongoing relationship with Maia is manifest.

His mum told me after the Level Two Spanish exam last year was horrendous, it was really hard, and he came home and he didn't speak to anyone for two days, he just kind of sat in his room. And I kind of anticipated he might be feeling like that. He got a merit and an excellence. But when I saw the merit on one paper I was like, I bet he's gone into some kind of shut down because he puts that pressure on himself. And yes, be disappointed, but know that it's still pretty amazing ... and he still got the subject endorsement ... and find the strength to move on.

Empathy for Ra's disappointment prompted Katie to share a similar experience from her own educational journey.

I emailed him and his mum. Yeah, because maybe he's a little bit like me as well. Like when I was a student, I got a B in a history paper and like it caused a massive meltdown and then I wasn't going to do senior history because it was so terrible that I had this B at Year 11. And I've kind of learnt to let go of that and I can kind of see it in certain students. ... And I think the fact that you just say yeah if you want to go home and cry, go home and cry, it's fine, because I did. I felt horrible. And then I would tell them the truth, my best friend who was rubbish at history got an A and that annoyed me even more. But I think they just like the honesty and I was like I know that sounds' really pathetic, but to me that was the most important thing. That was the only exams I had been through that were nationally recognised, the same as you, that's the only real measuring stick that I was worried about. And I said but it does go away, and actually I got an A at A levels in year 13. And I think that maybe helped Ra snap out of it. Yeah you got a merit, but it doesn't mean you're not going to get an excellence [in your] last year. And it was on one paper, the other paper was still an excellence.

For Katie, such conversations were possible only because of the nature of the relationships that were established at the school through the PEP processes.

If we didn't have all those systems (PEP) in place and if we hadn't offered Ra the trip to Spain or whatever I might not have known Ra well enough to have anticipated that he would be sitting really upset with a merit. But because his goals are clearly shared with his teachers and we speak to them a lot about what they actually want to get out of X, Y, Z class, I kind of knew that he would be feeling like that, so you are

able to pre-empt and to give more personalised support, because there's a lot more data available.

At home Maia, on the same page as Katie, approached Ra.

I said to him, well, does that affect your Uni? No, no. I said, well, put things into perspective Son. Getting a merit is just as good. It was hard, it was hard. If anything, what it did was freak him out. I think that was his biggest concern with level threes, was getting a merit. He thought, that's it, he's not getting into Uni. And I was like, oh my gosh, what's going on son. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

By year 13 Ra, undeterred, decided to take on the challenge of scholarship Spanish. Katie reflects on the commitment this demanded from everyone:

None of them are native Spanish speakers. I had tried to prepare them. Sadly in languages the scholarships will go to natives. Two were Māori and Pasifika. The other one was the French boy ... and it's a tricky exam. But they were kind of adamant and I was like, there's no guarantee that any of you are going to get it. All three of you could sit it and it could end up with none of you. But then we decided we would look at it the other way. There was no need to stress about scholarship exam because there's nothing to lose. So we had a class on Monday, last lesson, and they would stay for an extra hour and a half every Monday for the whole year, and they've stepped it up. And I actually really enjoyed teaching that.

Looking back over 13 years of schooling Ra identifies early *anxiety attacks in intermediate, and bad stage fright* as inhibitors:

So during primary and year nine I would never ask questions in class because I thought, oh no, I can't. I'm just asking, I might feel like I am stupid or something. But then I learnt this quote, I think it was like Confucius or something. He said a person who asks is a fool for a second and a person who never asks is a fool forever. So I thought to myself, you have to ask. If you are stuck just ask and then just slowly you would develop. Being a confident speaker, like developing those skills, that's definitely the main thing.

Coming from intermediate, he was proud of what he did, but what I thought was really good was not actually pretty good. Realising this in years 10 and 11 came as a shock to him. You could actually do more and this is not actually the best standard that you could do.

In his educational development, Ra made use of a number of PEP systems. While there were challenges for his parents in negotiating work and the care of younger siblings, attending the HSP meetings was worth the effort. Maia noted an improvement from the traditional student-teacher interviews, even the formal letter to her employer to sanction her absence during work time was important to her. *Now they have HSP, or home school partnership*

interviews. That's a little bit more in-depth ... having a lot of engaging koreros. There are contracts involved. You sit there. You discuss your child's goals. So just so long as I have the right paperwork [for my employer] and everything, my employer is fine with that.

Maia explained that the school had *made a point in making sure that parents knew what was going on with their child, and because we knew earlier in the year we could sit with them and help them to make sure that they are going to gain their credits for levels one and two.*

As well as ensuring that his parents were aware of his needs from the outset, for Ra the HSP meetings also generated change in the nature of his interactions around his schoolwork at home.

It used to be just the parents and the teachers having the conversation. And then the third aspect of the student, so putting myself in those interviews as well kind of gives the parents a different perspective and also the teachers, just to see how we interact with the other half of the equation so to speak. It's caused me to ... I didn't talk with my parents about school much, I kind of tried to keep it separate. But now it's just become a normal topic to speak about at home. Like how class was today, anything interesting happen and any goss. So it definitely keeps the ball rolling at home ... which is good. I'm conversing a lot more with my parents about school and stuff.

There were flow-on effects for the role Maia and Pale played in the broader school domain of PEP and academic achievement. The ease generated from their own learning conversations about their children developed into a wider school initiative:

We've been able to get, to form really good relationships at school with the teachers. I mean at Orua College they also have what we call Māori achievement, so that is for Māori students that achieve their own little tasks to be recognised. Pale and I were actually part of the committee that helped. Well we designed it, didn't we, with a couple of the other parents.

School-based PEP structures such as the diary had significant places for Ra. *During class I have got into the habit of making notes in my diary, so like maybe certain areas that I had to focus on for subjects and recording when deadlines are due and the assessment.*

The most important system, however

would definitely have to be the interaction with the whānau leader and also being able to just freely access your current statuses with your pie charts and everything, like especially during ILC time, that stood out the most for me this year because with most other schools you are not as freely available to this information as we are. So it's definitely a lot more personal, catch up, update type thing. So not necessarily

academic as with your teachers in ILC, but more like how is life at home and how's work ... more of the, like the personal goals type thing.

Significant relationships with learning leaders and his whānau tutor were recognised by Ra as key at a vulnerable time for adolescents. *They are there for you should anything happen, always open regardless of what you are doing, I've had a couple every year... it's a very turbulent time when you are still growing, it's a crucial time.* This connection was also reflected in the way Ra's parents perceived one teacher in particular:

Oh she's the loveliest lady I have ever met. She's lovely (Maia)... She is awesome. She cares so much (Pale). At first I thought she was quite a push-over, you know, cause she's a tiny little English woman, and I thought oh the kids are just going to walk all over you. But the kids have the highest respect for her. She's a lovely teacher. I mean she's in your face (Maia). And it's how she does it too (Pale).

In his teachers Ra appreciated *that whole friendly approachable kind of part of a teacher, and also being firm. Not strict, but firm. Being flexible, but at the same time maintaining that firmness.*

Goal setting was noted in Ra's second interview as having ongoing importance. *Every Monday [the Tutor Teacher's] like do your goals for the week and then compare them to the goals that you set at the beginning of the year, are you working towards that?* In English for a period of time *the teacher was very engaged with our personal goals. So why take English for a subject?* In Spanish, chemistry and economics Ra felt there was continuous reinforcement and extension of the value of setting goals. He reflects on a meeting of his parents – *it was either year 11 or year 12—with my maths teacher at the time where the teacher asked have you made the correct choices, in terms of subjects and things?* Ra explained he wanted to go to university:

And then afterwards she said, oh so what are you doing after Uni? I was caught back, my goodness, haven't thought that far yet, and she said that's the thing, life doesn't stop after Uni, it's continuous, you've got to keep planning, keep making goals for afterwards because once you achieve those goals you've got to make new ones and go after those. So after that meeting I got that value instilled, ... never stop making goals. Keep planning because there's always going to be something new around the corner type thing.

Trying for an external scholarship became one of Ra's goals with the application process starting in his second interview. By the third interview he reflected:

That was a strenuous process. The scholarship was from the First Foundation Group. Basically what the scholarship comprises of, it takes on a three pillar

approach. The first pillar is four years of paid part-time work experience with the company that we have interviews with. The second pillar is \$12,000 over your three years of uni study. The scholarship is four years, starting next year. It depends on the cost of your course. So they make contributions.

Sharing special news with school and family was a highlight for Ra.

Even (the principal), even when she is on duty and she has gotten to know me, aside from being another student in the school, so we usually have those little catch ups and things. ... It was not even awkward when I found out the news that I got the First Foundation Scholarship, so (the DP) pulled me aside and he goes, oh there seems to be something wrong here, it appears your name has come up as one of the recipients for the scholarship. I was like, oh my gosh, don't do that to me. I was like, I've actually got it, and he was like, yeah, I was like, oh my gosh. And then (the principal) comes in and she's like, I've just come to gate crash your congratulations.

I actually planned it out. So I got home. Mum actually took the day off work so we couldn't call her because she wasn't at work and we don't have a telephone, nor does she have a cell phone. So I was like ... sweet ... we can go surprise her. I walk in trying to keep a straight face and I passed her a letter because I requested one that day which was last week Friday, sat down with her, gave it to her to read. She knew that it was the First Foundation letter, starts reading through it. Reads that we are delighted have Ra to work for Number 1 Shoes and she jumped up and started screaming and running round the house. I realised how important it is to my mum. I didn't actually think about that ... because I'm going to be the first person on my mum's side to go to university, so to her she's like over the top.

Actually the first day after exams finished, so the first of December we had our big scholarship presentations. Oh my gosh. That was really grand and it was quite humbling because the first time in the Business School building. So we all got moved into the auditorium where we had our big celebration and certificate handouts. My mum, my dad and my grandparents on my mum's side. So that was really cool for them to see how hard I worked kind of thing.

Coming to know himself around motivation led Ra to the realisation that there were opportunities to learn from feedback, even if this were sometimes painful. Improvement could overcome self-doubt:

I guess after our first interview, perhaps September, I felt that my motivation level was at a plateau, just wasn't motivated enough to do work. I kind of went down a bit. I tried going for the top student leader but in our whānau that's very hard competition and I didn't get top student. I got academic leader though which was pretty cool. I asked my whānau leaders to give me some pointers as perhaps why I didn't get the head student leader position. They said that I doubt myself too much, and so I mean it wasn't necessarily a shock for me but it was like one of those things that you didn't want to hear. I started crying and then I realised shortly after, why

should I be crying? That's just a fault of mine. I can work with that. I can make myself better in that area and from there I've just driven myself to be more proactive, have less doubts, have that confidence within myself just to go out there and give it a shot.

Looking to the future began in year 9.

We had a 3D episode which was future careers. So we went to the careers department, they gave us a couple of hints about what finishing school work could be like. The teacher was in charge, she was giving us websites and brochures and pamphlets to look at as well. So yeah, got into it quite early. That 3D episode was my big star. After that I was perhaps focused.

This motivation endured for Ra. *I guess I'm always motivated to learn. I like coming to school. I guess I might be a bit weird compared to my friends or something like that.* Maintaining it, however, made demands on his personal resources and this could take its toll. By interview 2 he reports being *just overwhelmed with study. I just feel that I try to make everyone happy which is impossible. Yeah, family, friends, teachers, just everyone.* He begins to second-guess himself after less than hoped-for results. *I just used to sit back and think, um, why am I doing this? Am I doing it for myself or am I doing it for my family? Who am I doing it for?* At this time school revolved around his need to keep abreast with careers department information, to keep university courses in mind in selecting subjects, and taking care not to over commit to extracurricular activities. Despite this pressure Katie believed that *for Ra, personally I actually think a lot of his motivation is intrinsic.*

Ordinarily on a wider school scale I would say [motivation is generated through] HSP interviews, but actually I'm not sure in Ra's case whether that's the biggest factor because I think a lot of his motivation comes from himself and his parents happen to be very supportive and onto it and will turn up for HSPs. But I think if they didn't he's just got a lot of self-determination. So I actually think his ICL time and being able to talk to his own learning leaders very honestly and openly is what has been the best for Ra, so maybe a whole school culture of connection and relationships has benefited Ra. I mean with me and with the other Spanish learning leader, he speaks Spanish outside of the classroom quite a lot because he wants to get better, and he has just taken that upon himself. He will just come up to us for a conversation in Spanish randomly. I think it's a lot of his own motivation.

Katie also attributed the school's 100 minute lesson structures as resources for intrinsic motivation:

It does mean you have to plan a wide variety of learning activities and so they will inevitably at some point in the 100 minutes be a pair task or a group task or maybe both. I think they just therefore very much are in the habit.

Peers also play a part in Ra's motivation. *The majority of my friends are also like leaders or they are also committed to extra things out of school or also working as well.* Also working towards formal summative awards together helped. Ra won the Māori achievement awards while his friend, also Māori/Samoan/Cook Island, *took out a lot of awards in the Pasifika. We were really good mates and we understand that whoever gets it gets it, but we were hoping that we would at least get one each.*

Constructive peer support became a feature of Ra's learning, as Katie explains:

I know with scholarship Ra and the other two would be on Facebook and they would surprise me. Like they were swapping good radio stations to listen to in Spanish and they came in and they had all watched this movie that I had no idea they were going to watch in Spanish.

Ra's development as a self-regulated learner was conscious:

I definitely feel that it's like almost that I have to drive my own learning because it's reached the point now where you don't have to be at school anymore and you're only here because you want to be here. It's just that you've basically taken responsibility of what you want to do in terms of education. So the teachers, they are there to help you achieve, whereas they're not there to teach you stuff anymore.

Obtaining a first foundation scholarship assigned responsibility to Ra for *planning for myself now. There's only so much the school can do and basically ... it's all up to me.* What lay beyond school was, in Katie's view, *the belief that he can change his future quite drastically.* What is important she feels, is *knowing his place and being comfortable, being Ra.*

The Future ... knowing that you will be accountable for a lot of things in your life now

For Ra, being the first in family to go to university was a powerful motivating factor. Maia noted that amongst his friends it was the destination of choice for *eight of them (friends and first in family to go to Uni).* Ra's transition to university was, according to Maia, *quite the eye-opener for us as well.* She describes the preliminary sessions that the First Foundation set up:

I had no clue what it was like for Uni students really until we went to one of the seminars and they explained what they were about, I thought it was just another school. ... Everybody was togetherness. The multi-culture that was there, that you are not alone.

The scholarship in his last year at school also guaranteed Ra part-time work,

so that really takes off that feeling of burden that I had previously with the whole financial thing I had on my parents and stuff. I mean now, because I have been working, I feel like I have more of a role to provide for my family. A hundred dollars every fortnight which I feel is not so much.

Balancing work and school sensibly could be a challenge, *times when I'm going to look back and say I could have done this better, I could have done that better.* Nonetheless in his recognition that PEP was more than negotiating school, Ra was able to recognise progress. *I feel that yeah I've definitely come a long way.*

In his final individual interview with Alice, Ra's Whānau Tutor, the end is in sight.

I printed these off Kaymar this morning just to check that we're still on track with all of your targets that we talked about. Two interviews a year and this was our second one, so first one was with Mum and Dad. So do you just want to have a quick look at it? So where do you think you are in terms of achieving NCEA with Level 3? Level 3? I'm thinking, yeah, it's definitely achievable. I mean two more credits away.

Ra's educational trajectory was monitored at school through a careers survey with all the year 13 students, just asking what they will be doing after leaving college.

So I said I'm going to the University of Auckland and doing my BCom and BA as a conjoint. And from then she asked do you know what the requirements are for each course and also in terms of conjoint? And I was like, needed a refresher.

While it was important to have the formal side of university resolved, more complex according to Katie, was negotiating the university climate, especially for students living at home:

They still live around the corner from each other, but they don't have the same timetables that they had at school, so they get the train in at different times and they've got class at different times and the campus is big. It's not like a school. So they don't just bump into each other for a chat and I think that does make them feel a little bit lonely. ... Because they are not in the hostels, there's no one just to go: Don't worry about it, me too! And I think they get intimidated by other students from other schools who are seemingly brilliant and have lots to say. That person might actually be saying rubbish. I don't know if we actually tell them the truth. And you kind of say, no, it's an exciting journey and it will be different. I don't think they get the whole ... you might hate it! What are you going to do?

I am worried that when he hits the first bump ... how he is going to bounce back from that, because you don't have that network at university that you have at school. ... I hope actually that he has built strong enough connections here that if he does hit a bump he can email somebody here, and maybe we can...

Aware of these challenges but also letting go the strong connection that she had shared with her students Katie acknowledged:

I got actually quite emotional when he left for example. Like I don't think I really realised how much of a positive influence that group, and Ra in particular, had had on me... actually the first Monday that they weren't there, I was a bit like, oh, it was, it was a little bit sad.

In Ra's final interview he was both reflective and wistful about the part of his PEP journey he had completed and the one he was about to embark on.

I see myself as able to take that opportunity, whereas my parents weren't able to. So basically from Uni, whatever happens afterwards is what happens ... I feel sad because I don't want to leave, leave all my friends and part ways. Having structure. You've been doing this for 13 years and then all of a sudden you have been given free reins of basically your life after high school, so that's kind of a shock. And also knowing that you will be accountable for a lot of things in your life now. It's more a double edged sword there. It's like, oh my gosh, I can't wait. So it's more excitement than happiness type thing. To be leaving school 'cause you know you are going to go somewhere if you put your mind to it. But at the same time you know it cuts really deep 'cause you are leaving this place. Being able to just think back and actually having time to reminisce about younger years in high school. That's been a biggy. Just seeing that you have actually come this far. Now you are at this point where the world is for your taking.

Summary of the Differences Amongst Students

The students were selected for this second phase of the project because the perceptions of their support staff at school and also their self-reported understandings aligned with the survey baseline PEP criteria. While their stories reveal an emerging picture that resonates with the degree of their involvement in their PEP, this picture includes many more layers that relate to the students' stated intentions and actions.

Common practices and strategies in the systems of PEP were evident for each student. Students recognised teachers had confidence in their capabilities and interest in their futures, as well as regard and respect for their families and their culture. Each student had a range of opportunities provided to support their development as independent and autonomous learners. The use of data to make judgements about current performance and the improved feedback practices of HSP and whānau-student meetings, set out to close the gap between current and desired performance. Chances to close this gap and judgements the students made and control they took, however varied considerably. In particular there were

noticeable differences in the capabilities the students developed in becoming self-regulatory learners.

All three students experienced compositional factors in the home and school which impacted on their PEP. In Ra's case it was financial hardship, while Mereana experienced difficult family issues and Sonny was distracted by his social world. In the cases of Mereana and Sonny these factors outweighed their ability to fully engage with their PEP. Although Sonny enjoyed his educational experience at school, as with his group of disengaged students in Chapter 5, enacting and participating in his PEP was a persisting problem, particularly in his final year at school. Sonny did not appear interested in transferring the discipline and routine of his gym membership to active participation in PEP. Put simply, and of his own admission, he was not ready to make important decisions about his future. Instead he was content for others to make decisions for him. When Sonny did take charge he 'picked' subjects that did not substantively align with incremental future choices, leaving him isolated and unmotivated. Conversely, Ra's subject choosing, particularly Spanish had an ongoing and powerful motivational effect on him as a learner.

The belief of their parents in their education at school and trajectories beyond was also apparent in the student and parent comments. Of all the parents, it was Ra's who were most involved with the school community through their involvement with Māori achievement. Although Sonny's mother connected with teachers, her frustration with Sonny also appeared to disengage her to a point with the school, where five months after completing his NCEA they had still not checked his results. Mereana's family did come to HSP meetings and her mother communicated with her learning leaders and whānau tutor, with their experiences in the school domain improving alongside Mereana's.

Peers appeared to play a significant role in the students' engagement with their PEP. For Ra motivated friends who like him were first in family to attend university, had a supportive and positive influence. For Sonny it was the opposite, it appeared that they, like Sonny were not motivated around their PEP, preferring to focus on other things like working out. Mereana recognised that peers could be distractions, but ultimately made her own decisions about how this would affect her desire to stay at school.

The ownership the students took around their PEP was revealed in their HSP and whānau meetings where the degree of active dialogue was evident and the students were able to express evaluative decisions around their PEP. Ra's meeting indicated a balanced

conversation and there were points at which he drove important ideas as the decision maker. In her whānau meeting Mereana, acknowledging behavioural and attitudinal issues, had a less clear focus for her future but showed consideration for long term goals. Sonny allowed his whānau tutor and mother to dominate his meeting with his voice on the periphery of the conversation.

Significantly all three students expressed their love and enjoyment of their school. In their individual interviews they also revealed the power of reflection over their PEP journey, identifying places where good decisions and influences occurred and capabilities developed. Alternatively they understood times where they felt they could not grasp momentum in their PEP, but identified what that should consist of all the same. Mereana and Sonny had some bottom lines. First in family to complete five years of secondary schooling was a powerfully important driver for Mereana. Not getting permanently suspended was in itself an achievement she noted. Both Mereana and Sonny wanted level 2 NCEA as a baseline qualification. In Sonny's case whatever his distractions (which increased in year 13), he was determined to take on the battle to repeat and advance his English to level 2 literacy knowing that somehow in the future this might equip him with future options. In Mereana's case there was a sense that the longer she stayed at school the more options she got. All of the students commented on the fact that there was still much they needed to understand about their future trajectories. This was borne out by their awareness that transitioning from school had its sadness.

The Next Chapter

In this penultimate chapter of the thesis, a discussion of the research findings follows. The discussion is structured around three over-arching themes that emerged from the data and relate to the impact of PEP on senior secondary school students. The first theme addresses the changing shape of secondary schools and the extent to which the study school created opportunities for student agency around their PEPs; the second focuses on the role of parents in these processes; the third examines the significance of students' efficacy beliefs about navigating their educational trajectories.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Opportunity Gap

Developing an understanding of the growing importance of PEP has drawn attention to global, national and local factors in the literature which account for shifts and changes in the context within which secondary students negotiate their educational pathways. As these factors are complex and inter-related, gathering the views and experiences of students, their parents and teachers on the impact of current twenty-first century PEP initiatives has provided rich sources of data, not only in regard to schooling, but also to how PEP contributes to future prospects and lifelong learning. An examination of processes and procedures as a measure of PEP was not considered complete without also measuring the capabilities of the students and the kinds of conditions in the school which might allow PEP to flourish. The insights provided by the participants, read alongside the literature, suggest issues that have been identified throughout the wider national and global context of secondary schooling, while also accounting for two stories, one about the learners and the other about a school.

In the current study, voices of the student participants revealed differences and similarities in their range of involvement and experiences of PEP. Bronfenbrenner's (1986, 1989) ecological systems theory was used to frame the learners' responses, understandings and practices. Findings reported in Chapter Five revealed that the principal and teachers had similar understandings about the ways that PEP was supported and practised in the school. The parents also held understandings in common in regard to the nature, place and role of PEP, and of their place in that role. In contrast the three groupings of students reported in Chapter Six, drew attention to the differences among them in relation to their personal competency beliefs around engagement. Differences among the students were further accentuated through vignettes of a student from each of the disengaged, semi-engaged and engaged groups in Chapter Seven. The use of Bronfenbrenner's (1989, 2005) schema providing a process-person-context model proved illuminating. It raised awareness of the contention that a congruence of active partnerships and common understandings (e.g., Addison, 1992; Johnson, 2008) might contribute to students' development and ownership of their planning.

The interpretive nature of the research provided possibilities for interrogating the similarities and differences in students' perceptions and practice of PEP as well as their

development into independent, self-regulating learners in charge of their educational trajectories. It provided possibilities also to unravel and better understand the meanings the maturing students ascribed to the increasingly complex layers of their PEP journeys. How effective the students were in mediating these interactive systems is highlighted through a detailed examination of the comments of the students, teachers and their parents. The influence of the students' efficacy beliefs on the uptake and enactment of systems and procedures associated with PEP became apparent. Parental involvement as part of the HSP was an important mediating influence, particularly in relation to shared understanding of goals set and through evidence of and regular access to their child's data. Hence the HSP provided an illuminating lens affording significant insight into the conceptions and practices of the students. Regular whānau-student teacher meetings also contributed to an understanding of the PEP activities, relationships and roles of the developing senior student. The ensuing discussion is therefore structured under three major themes that emerged from the data. These are the extent to which the school created opportunities for student agency around their PEP, the role of parents in the school, and students' efficacy beliefs about navigating their educational trajectories.

Opportunities for Student Agency

This section draws together the findings and examines the significance of PEP in relation to the challenges currently facing education. How PEP is operationalised through leadership and teacher ownership is then addressed, enabling insights from student and teacher testimonies to give direction and definition alongside the literature.

Political and Socio-cultural Context of the School

In the past three decades many countries have attempted systemic reform of their school systems. In New Zealand curriculum change, assessment change and changes in funding and control have been wide-ranging (Department of Education, 1988; Kelsey, 2001; Levin, 2002). The NZC (MOE, 2007) emphasises teaching as a process of inquiry, challenging schools to tailor contents of curriculum to best fit their own context. Such tailoring requires thoughtful understanding of the nature of the needs of students in particular school contexts. Orua College is situated in a low socio-economic community that has at least three times more than the one in four students who, traditionally and currently, are underserved by the education system and do not reach their potential (Thrupp, 2014). Research has shown that many families remain in poverty even when parents are employed full time (Duncan et al., 2011; Gennetian et al., 2010). This is especially urgent in Aotearoa/New Zealand where the

gap between richest and poorest students continues to increase and compares unfavourably with other OECD countries (OECD, 2013).

Understanding the inner workings of a twenty-first century school, so often mysterious to outside visitors (Sahlberg, 2011), begins with an understanding of the highly complex set of social forces and patterns which underpin its educational landscape. For many of Orua's secondary school students, low socio-economic status is particularly significant. Chapter 2 has addressed the neoliberal shift in educational policy in 1990s as promoting increased competition where state restructuring has had adverse effects on low SES families such as those in this study (Leach & Zepke, 2005; Thrupp, 1998). Under the previous Keynesian welfare system the interventionist state had been at the centre of social policy design and implementation, mediating structurally based issues of poverty (Easton, 1976). The subsequent rise of neoliberalism as a globalising ideology has seen declining social support and rapid growth in income inequality in the country. While children growing up in poverty are disadvantaged (Thrupp, 2014; Wylie, 2013), and in low decile schools many students come from families on low incomes, such schools play a major role in mediating that disadvantage. A large proportion of the students in this study, in current Ministry of Education discourse, are considered to be 'priority learners'. This case study provides important insights into how one school has worked within neoliberal imperatives to support its students.

Historically the consequences of disengagement of young people from mainstream education have shifted. This reflects changing labour market opportunities where, since the 1980s, full time employment has become increasingly inaccessible for early school leavers (Higgins & Nairn, 2014; Strathdee, 2001). Standing (2012) has argued that increasing competitiveness, the resilience of the ideology of meritocracy and expectations relating to flexibility have had the effect of transferring risks and insecurity onto workers and their families, resulting in minimal trust relationships with the state. In all likelihood the effects Standing refers to – insecure employment or being in jobs of limited duration and with minimal labour protection, and being cast within a status that offers, and often takes for granted the naturalness of, no sense of career, or secure occupational identity – could characterise this school community. The potential therefore of producing the frustrated and vulnerable precariat student is high. Government policies have actively promoted the importance of young people staying in education to gain qualifications in order to improve their labour-market prospects.

The social contours of the globalising process for a school like Orua College also come from policy directives for education that are based on an assessment system for cross country comparison (OECD, 2013). International competition influences understandings of achievement, not only in terms of how it is conceived and measured, but also through the international methods of evaluating achievement. Hence the ‘PISA gap’ (Dale, 2014, p. 9) highlights the achievement discrepancies between high and low decile schools in New Zealand, setting challenges for the decile 3 students in this study. However, in focusing on the achievement gap, the ‘opportunity gap’ is often played down, serving to perpetuate the discourses of deficit in relation to the achievement and outcomes for economically disadvantaged and minority students. Historically assessment in schools internationally, was designed primarily for purposes of stratifying and comparing students with one another then sorting them into categories for different future outcomes (Fry, 1985; Stephenson, 2008). In New Zealand NCEA level 3 can be individually tailored to provide a qualification appropriate for university study and other future goals including employment immediately following school. School interventions such as Starpath (2005-13), which has targeted students currently under-represented at tertiary (and was involved in developing the functionality of the student data management system at Orua College), is a response to government imperatives to transition priority learners into tertiary study. The current research affirms that effective PEP should apply not only to those planning to go on for university study, but can and should apply to all students. The quality of engagement with educational pathways and the product resulting from that endeavour is important for every occupation and undertaking, not merely for traditional academic study in tertiary education. It can also be an effective tool in reconfiguring the sense of limits and sense of possibilities that Bourdieu (1974) wrote of, that so often gets inscribed for and by students throughout their educational experiences.

Currently the government’s better public service goals include a 2017 target of 85% of young people at age 18 years achieving Level 2 in NCEA, or an equivalent qualification (NZ Govt., 2012). These developments have specific relevance for Orua College because the school has a high retention rate of senior students at years 12 and 13 with many being the first in the family to complete five years of secondary education. As Higgins and Nairn (2014) have argued, aiming to increase retention does not and has not guaranteed engagement. The NZC requires that schools work to integrate the idea of key competencies – higher order goals of learning, where managing self is officially recognised as a key competency – essential to the development of “enterprising, resourceful, reliable, and

resilient” students, workers and members of the community (MOE, 2007, p. 12.) How well does current policy and its implementation fit with the findings at Orua College? On the one hand an instrumentalist view of the expectations written into the curriculum document might question what society gives to and expects from education where the state is not the best vehicle for progress and equity and its responsibility is absolved (Dale & Robertson, 2009). This model of new instrumentalism involves a narrow economic focus within a discourse of standards, competencies, choice, competition and autonomy (Hargreaves, 2003; Jennings & Stark Rentner, 2006). On the other hand, how the competency of managing self might contribute to social justice, self-management, and lifelong learning for citizenship, can draw its sources in student levels of management and ownership of PEP.

The current study takes the position that sound educational planning in the formative stages of a student’s life is a whole of life sustainability investment, not simply a pathway to work. Consequently learners are not merely reduced to the status of resources for significant economic gain (Ball et al., 2012). Rather planning ahead becomes an investment that has an important non-economic return (Snook & O’Neill, 2014). Understanding youth as a social group that has its own interests as well as being affected by changes in labour market relationships between school, employment and challenges of globalisation constitutes new conditions for students’ own voice and agency. Such conditions background this study and its concern for the way policy and the socio-cultural context of the school community are operationalised for Orua College students.

A Map of the School

In terms of an educational and societal system Chapter Five reveals a rich and authentic grounding and understanding of the inner workings of a school, the true nature and peculiarity of this school being that it has been created in the twenty-first century. The rebranding of roles, titles and systems and the design of the physical layout of the school signalled an intention to move away from some traditional conventions of New Zealand secondary schools.

Philosophy and Kaupapa Enabling School Culture

The teachers in this study commented on the importance of understanding the intentions behind the uptake of new strategies and approaches promoted through the school’s philosophy. Creatively applying a strong cultural knowledge base to their own school organisational patterns was part of this vision. Māori kaupapa held strong philosophical

significance for the staff and students which was also a shared and accepted knowledge base of the school's bicultural and multicultural parent community. Drawing from this kaupapa for their new school based on the kind of shared responsibility, trust and professionalism Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) describe in *The Fourth Way*, the teachers embedded the identity, language and culture of Māori as the touchstone of the schools' philosophy. This extended to the school's physical layout, the organisational backbone of the whānau system, protocols of welcome, celebration and teaching through the marae (the physical and spiritual space central to Māori kaupapa) and aspects of the discipline structure such as restorative justice. Bishop et al. (2007) have suggested that the creation of learning contexts needs to allow for both visible and invisible elements of culture.

The literature suggests that embedding Māori students' backgrounds and their cognitive, social and cultural repertoires into classroom activities gives constructive support to learners (Bishop et al., 2010; McNaughton, 2002). Placing Te Kotahitanga framework at the centre of the school, involved changing the emotional and cognitive responsiveness of teachers to Māori students (and by default others) particularly in relation to the varied positioning and relationships that enhance the agency of the learners (Bishop et al., 2009). This also promulgated ongoing cycles of personal growth for teachers. As Sahlberg (2011) has argued through his experience of the Finnish school system, it is the continual adjustment of schooling to the changing needs of individuals and society that is important for self-directed growth and development. In focusing on factors in which they had control, such as developing a learning climate and collaborative teamwork that builds on student success, the principal and participating teachers also acknowledged the importance of the cultural capital of their students (Bourdieu, 1996). The need to value the social, linguistic and cultural processes of their diverse community as resources for learning and teaching was identified as important (Moll, 2010). The teachers viewed all their students as culturally located beings, with a strong Pasifika presence evident in the school, guided by principles expressed within the Ministry of Education's Pasifika education plans (MOE, 2009, 2013b) and Māori education strategies (MOE, 2008, 2013a). A first step was ensuring that the learning environment, learning partnerships and learning discussions acknowledged and respected the students' cultures. Then teachers were able to engage their students in managing their PEP.

Bishop and Berryman (2006) claim that cultural responsiveness is a way of thinking and being that puts considerable onus on teachers to confront their personal beliefs and their

relationships with students and communities. This study has demonstrated that, in reflecting and valuing such knowledges and skills by incorporating these into the kaupapa of the school, the participating teachers were also enabling these resources to be ‘cashed in’ at school (McNaughton, 2011, p. 10). Alongside the aims of goal setting, reflection and encouragement to think forward these cultural resources were perceived as a supportive base which served to develop confidence and influence the notion of the self-regulated learner, drawing from the explicit aim of the school’s philosophy of producing independent learners.

Leadership and Relational Trust

Developing qualities of independence and student ownership of learning and management of their PEP requires a whole school approach. Building the capability of schools and school leadership for continuous improvement in raising student outcomes has been a focus of ongoing policy reform (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009). The Principal of Orua College involved others in organisational decisions through shared leadership typically occurring through the whānau leaders to the tutors (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Designating the role of initiating PEP throughout the school to one of the Deputy Principals demonstrated how leadership could be integrated in a way that was responsive to particular conditions facing the school (Gordon, 2010). Teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) and emphasis on collective purpose (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006) were also highlighted by the staff as important. Whichever way school leadership was dispersed or distributed at Orua College it was important from the outset that those in leadership roles became expert at working systems that were created (Gordon & Louis, 2009). Hence, the founding principal and school leaders co-constructed and then implemented a plan to deliver a range of evidence-based systems, practices and learning opportunities for the students through integrating educational research and knowledge into practice.

As the school grew, the inter-relationship between strong leadership practices and quality PEP systems in promoting student management of their educational trajectories became an important focus, ensuring organisational improvement (Leithwood & Louis, 2012) and sustainability over time. In mapping out their own unique strategies in a new school, the teachers talked about leadership as providing direction, exercising influence and stability. Robinson et al. (2009) contend that “relational trust” is integral to the welfare of a school community (p. 199). With the principal at the centre of its development, relational trust at Orua College, as the basis of a sound model of PEP, recognised the need to harness family

and community energy through an atmosphere of collaborative teamwork with the school. Robinson et al. (2009) and McNaughton (2011) have argued that leaders who develop relational trust are able to create educationally powerful links between schooling and the identities of students and families which also impacts on students' achievement. Establishing goals, leading teacher learning, development and capabilities through building relational trust are qualities of leadership that enhance an atmosphere of collaborative teamwork at the school.

As teachers' discourse was examined in more detail it became apparent that when relational trust was robust, reform initiatives were more likely to be taken up by school members and become embedded throughout the schools' organisation (Fullan, 2003). Teachers demonstrated that they have a genuine view of both their students and themselves as learners. This meant that their beliefs were open to challenge as were their approaches to supporting their students' PEP. In encouraging staff to work outside their comfort zones at times, the principal acknowledged the level of discomfort which had to be taken into account.

The teachers identified a number of lenses with which to interrogate their practices around their students' PEP. Harker and O'Neill (2004) have argued that social and cultural factors cannot be considered as irrelevant when examining any teacher-student interactions. For the teachers in this study, such factors were placed at the centre in order to promote successful student engagement with their PEP. While reasons for factors that potentially impede school effectiveness were given, these were seen as surmountable at school level through hard work and staff perseverance. Even when these reasons were not common to all teachers, what did stand out was that teachers' beliefs were not implicitly embedded in deficit theorising. Rather they acknowledged the transformative potential of embracing lenses from which to understand their relationships as expressed in such resources as the 10 independent learning qualities displayed in the school foyer, classrooms and diaries, as well as the four Cs. These became the shared and common discourse of the school community.

In elaborating on these knowledge lenses, the teachers emphasised and demonstrated knowledge of theory, particularly overarching theories of teaching and learning; knowledge of the importance of reflection; and knowledge of an array of PEP wider than classroom practice alone. For example the whānau tutors in particular needed to equip the students with skills with which to think and internalise the impact of their data. Rather than this leading to disillusionment with their work, it seemed that such knowledge assisted the

students to understand and manage their PEP more comprehensively (Earl & Katz, 2006). As others have argued, good management systems and organisational structures that provide the necessary support and access to information and evidence make schools more effective organisations (Campbell & Levin, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007). In order to help students reflect critically on their practice through the data, the teachers themselves needed to have the capacity and confidence to examine and disaggregate student performance data and make critical sense of it, while developing action plans using data to adjust approaches to teaching (Timperley & Parr, 2010; Wayman et al., 2012). Improving their assessment literacy and that of their students was part of the essential knowledges the teachers considered conceptualised their roles. In this respect they acknowledged that their roles and responsibilities were in an ongoing cycle of change.

One of these changes evolved through the whānau-tutor relationship. A key interconnection in the PEP journey, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, was learning-focused relationships. The daily whānau tutor and student meeting was premised on two key components. The first was a relationship of trust where students could feel a sense of belonging. Student identity and culture was respected and students' needs empathised with (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009). The evidence suggests that there were a significant number of such tutors and learning leaders who students knew cared about their future and were ready to put effort into helping them achieve. The teachers talked about this process as both soft and hard caring.

The second component of this interconnection was the whānau tutor's active role in educational guidance and counselling which Valijarvi and Sahlberg (2008) have identified as an important factor in explaining low dropout rates in Finland. Developing student ownership of their PEP was a specific responsibility of the whānau tutors. To support this ownership the whānau tutors and leaders needed to provide the students with information about where they were headed, how they were achieving, where they needed to go next and how they could close gaps in their learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989). The importance of understanding academic pathways through the selection of appropriate pre-requisites to avoid poor subject choices (Madjar et al., 2009) was a responsibility shared with learning leaders.

The mesosystem tutor-student partnership in the current study also focused on initiating learning (Allday & Yell, 2013) through generating data informed conversations and the setting of required personal, self-management and academic goals documented in their

student diaries. Supporting students to learn on their own via study skills, self-verbalisation and self-questioning were further areas of teacher influence. The vertical grouping of the whānau group also meant the whānau tutor enlisted the support of older students to share how the various elements of a student's PEP fitted together. Achieving consistency in the fifty whānau tutors' interactions and expertise across the range of students appeared to be the greatest challenge. Nonetheless, the centrality and importance of student-teacher relationships (Bottoms & Feagin 2002; Whiston et al., 2011) was highlighted in the findings of the study through tutors knowing, personally caring for, and systematically tracking the progress of one student while in regular communication with parents and caregivers for up to five years.

At the same time as the teachers created new systems for their vision, there was also a place for renovating existing systems, such as career provision. A study by Vaughan and O'Neil (2010) found that while career advisors had been given a key role in assisting young people transition from school to work and further education, major changes in contemporary transitions meant that advisors were behind in knowledge and expertise. As has been argued (ERO, 2012; Vaughan & Gardiner, 2007; Wylie & Hodgen, 2011) haphazardness in career guidance delivery has been a pattern in New Zealand schools. At Orua College the call from the Deputy Principal with responsibility for careers, that every teacher become a careers teacher, was a work in progress. When career initiatives were built into 3D episodes or made physically accessible in whānau blocks, there was a reasonable take-up by students. Nonetheless though students dropped into Careers, and could be scaffolded through Gateway, there did not appear to be an active relationship between the majority of students and the Careers Centre which appeared to be slightly 'outside' of the teachers' interconnections also. Another issue seemed to be that parents were not systematically involved with the Careers Centre apart from specialist information evenings. Some opportunities orchestrated and controlled by Careers were outside of the parents' sphere of involvement and influence.

Collective Teacher Efficacy and PEP

In the main the teachers in this study had confidence in their professional abilities and expectations that they were able to perform actions leading to students' effective management of PEP. They influenced student agency through cognitive processes (particularly goal setting), motivational processes, (attributions of success in their academic partnerships with students), affective processes (especially when pastoral issues were

overwhelming) and selection processes (choices about subjects and future pathways). Geijsel, Slegers, Stoel and Kruger (2009) have contended that teachers with higher teacher efficacy than other teachers are more willing to participate in difficult and challenging professional learning opportunities, particularly those that involve students sharing control. Developing student engagement and success in turn strengthens their own beliefs in their effectiveness. Having an overall confidence about the organisational enhancement of their relatively new school also had a foundation of realistic self-appraisal. Teachers made reference to being overwhelmed at times with the constant evaluation of new processes, interrogation of action plans and the large amount of dialogue around PLD. New cycles of inquiry could leave them feeling uncomfortable and there was variability in how this was processed.

The teachers were willing to implement new approaches, believing they could make a difference to students, particularly difficult-to-teach students and students who were behind in their work, thus raising the low end of the achievement distribution (Ross, 2013). The use of the diary as a passport to access particular teachers during the students' ILC time is an example of such an approach. Munthe and Thuen (2009) have argued that teachers with high efficacy beliefs rely less on behaviourist and more on humanistic student management processes which contribute to the promotion of students' self-efficacy. The PEP systems at Orua College provided ongoing support for this process to occur from their beginnings at junior levels through 3D episodes, for example. These offered a good grounding for personalised learning, where students were encouraged to think forward.

A Programmatic Approach

A strong argument is made that there was a programmatic approach to PEP at Orua College which, like the ASCA model, established clear expectations around school counselling standards related to academic and future pathways (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). This 'guidance outlook' (Wright, 2012) has highlighted the expanding role of schools internationally in managing the development of adolescents in their PEP and guiding them towards future citizenship and lifelong learning (Jenkins, 2000). With the exception of Starpath support in the student data management system, Orua College self-organised its PEP system to suit the needs of its students, parents and teachers. A programmatic approach was intended to show that each process and system implemented was developed from a careful analysis of students' needs, achievement and related data (Hatch & Bowers, 2005).

Including such initiatives as the ILC, HSP, and whānau organisation, this programme was developed incrementally and organically as the school grew to encompass senior cohorts.

Mitchell, Hayes and Mills (2010) found that building knowledge within professional communities, as well as building models of professional learning, go beyond the add-on by experts. In drawing on their Australian experiences they examined how school and university expertise can come together and gain resources to meet the concerns, and question whose institutional knowledge is valued. These researchers ask whether interactions between teachers and researchers enable exchange and sharing of ideas and expertise across schools and universities, recommending an exchange of ideas across institutional boundaries to bring about change.

Parent Roles and Partnerships

This section examines the communication channels between the parents and the school as they relate to student learning and management of PEP. Barriers to fostering genuine partnerships are addressed and processes for facilitating parent involvement examined. The use of Bronfenbrenner's systems model helps to explain and better understand the complex meanings the parents, students and teachers ascribe to their interconnections (Punch, 2005).

Attendance or Participation

Congruent and active partnerships between school and home emphasised in Bronfenbrenner's (1992) mesosystem were a key objective at Orua College (Martin, 2013). Parent and teacher discourse was reflective of this goal as they talked of ways to mediate pressures and cultivate this relationship. Stressors that typically constrained parents in the Orua College community relating to health, poverty, and experiences of their own marginalisation through schooling (Gniewosz & Eccles, 2013) also encompassed the parents' workplace issues in the exosystem. Much has been written about parents finding it difficult to maintain active relationships with their children's schools because of work commitments (Duncan et al., 2011; Gennetian et al., 2010; Sirin, 2005). Many parents in this study were working in poorly paid jobs with long work hours or working two jobs. Little familiarity with the school system and parents' own lack of confidence to work with the school can also be an issue (see for example Ceballos et al., 2010; Hattie, 2009). The principal referred to some parents having had negative experiences as students or limited prior education which were factors in their orientation to their child's school.

Breaking such cycles in parent responses to and engagement with secondary schools has been a challenge for educators nationally and internationally (e.g., Biddulph et al., 2003; Jaynes, 2005, 2007; U. S. Department of Education, 2010). While in low SES communities it is common to attribute educational inequality to the lack of family resources, including the number of books, access to technology and quality of conversations in the home, it is not inevitable that children from disadvantaged groups will fail (Snook & O'Neill, 2014). Opportunities for engagement with their child's learning through purposeful school-based systems and practices allowed Orua College parents to enhance PEP for students by working with both teachers and their child to choose subjects, set goals and foster motivation to learn.

In cultivating genuine partnerships the school was mindful of the difference between parent attendance and parent participation, or low and high levels of engagement (Reschley & Christenson, 2009). For example, when issues such as Māori achievement were addressed, whānau and iwi (tribal groups) were approached to learn and better understand what the Māori community valued and wanted for their children (McNaughton, 2012). The school's shared and accepted philosophical knowledge base of Māori kaupapa held significance for the majority of the school's parent community when it came to strengthening educational partnerships. Instead of a presentation by senior management at the meeting, it was parents who facilitated discussion leading to their setting up of a committee to promote and celebrate Māori achievement. As Amituanai-Toloa et al. (2009) have argued, parents need to be viewed as central to their child's achievement gains, rather than useful additions to their educational experience (see also Alton-Lee, 2003). Parents help students recognise their own progress and learning and have a positive impact on student achievement (Grolnick et al., 2013; Wigfield et al., 2006).

HSP: 'What ought to be'

In a sense the optimal platform for collaboration and consultation with the parents at Orua College was the HSP which addressed the students' current progress and what that ought to be. With few exceptions the students in the study were keen for their parents to attend their HSP meetings. Apart from being a key indicator of how the school actively facilitated and valued the partnership of parents (Grolnick et al., 2013; McNaughton & Lai, 2009) the HSP was an important catalyst for planning and progressing the students' PEP with many processes and procedures stemming from it.

The parents' and students' reactions to these new ways of working were seen as positive, with teachers giving the restructured parent interview resounding support. Even though teacher workloads were increased through phone calls and emails, securing parental attendance, as McKinley et al. (2009) found in their research, the ultimate goal of building family school partnerships, was viewed as worthwhile (Sanders & Epstein, 2000; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). Gaining high levels of parent commitment at the school HSPs was also noted by Robertson and Norrie (2011) in their New Zealand study, to be in direct contrast with low turn-outs in previous years. Similar to the teachers in Robertson and Norrie's study, teachers in the current study reported coming to know the students and their parents better where a personalised and in-depth assessment of their child's academic performance and PEP formed the basis of the improved relationship. The HSP laid a foundation for ongoing, often regular communication, usually via email exchange between parents and teachers. Parents talked about feeling confident to contact their child's whānau tutor if issues arose, and having their own insights valued in the process.

Pommerantz and Moorman (2010) identified two mechanisms for producing positive effects on achievement in family-school partnerships. The first is when data becomes a catalyst for constructive dialogue for students, teachers and parents so that parents can become better informed and more supportive. In the current study using data as a tool was initially a skill-development resource which led to accurate information about achievement so parents could support their children. Some parents reported developing a greater understanding of NCEA through analysing data credits which gave them more confidence about future trajectories in terms of the credits their child required. The second mechanism, as has also been argued by others (e.g., Kelly & Downey, 2011) underscores shared understandings and ownership of the issues being pursued.

Layers in the mesosystem provide connections to the student's microsystem and in the current study gave students tools to explore other dimensions of their PEP. Fan and Williams (2010) have argued that it is a combination of parental involvement and educational aspirations for their children that positively influences children's engagement, intrinsic motivation and approach to academic tasks. Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) suggest parental involvement impacts mostly on students' perceived control and confidence and their valuing of their own personal education effort. Disengaged students wanted their parents to come to the HSP even when they knew there might be difficult issues to address. Parents, students and teachers talked about the HSP as more than a place for information

sharing. In participating in learning conversations with both their teachers and parents, the students were able to share their thinking, believing and valuing of their PEP. They could showcase the practices they had acquired through independent decision-making, acting as learners and most importantly being recognised as learners in charge of their educational planning before their parents and teachers. In sharing their academic, self-management and personal goals they had the means to explore other dimensions of PEP. Hence, the HSP often was a springboard to develop other attributes that enabled them to see themselves as lifelong learners, motivated and capable of achieving even further academically. For others, the lens of HSP and its consequent follow-ups and reinforcement by teacher and parent, meant discussing the completion of their next level, or signing up for Gateway. These conversations also reflected important aspects of the students' lives and choices and importantly, their parents and teacher were involved.

Students' Expectations and Beliefs

While the students in the present study forged identities as learners they became enculturated into the practices of what that might mean through a range of PEP activities, relationships and roles in their developing microsystem. Just as interactions within these environments or systems become more complex as the child develops (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) the data reveals how PEP works and changes over the final two senior years at secondary school for the maturing student. These years of the students' secondary school careers were subjected to an even greater intensification through NCEA and its associated commitment of time and energy needed for PEP. To have meaningful consequences however, what might afford the students with the requisite knowledge repertoire of their PEP was also commensurate with their sense of belonging (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

The Self-managing Learner

As has been previously discussed, current conceptions of PEP have quite profoundly transformed the roles and responsibilities of learners as well as those of their teachers and parents. The discourse surrounding educational planning has been reconstructed, as students have been charged with the responsibility of self-management. In this study the students' building and fashioning of their learning partnerships with their teachers and parents has been demonstrated as part of this self-managing commitment through the specification and sharing of learning goals, choosing of subjects and fostering motivation to learn. In being assigned an expanded and crucial role in assessment and academic advisement processes, nearly all the students showed how they could take an active position. However the

expectation that they develop independent and autonomous management of their educational pathways, through the development of self-regulatory skills and behaviours proved more challenging and difficult.

This variance in participation with elements of their PEP accounted for the students' placement in the three groupings, disengaged, semi-engaged and engaged by their whānau leaders and tutors whose decisions ultimately guided the categorisation. There were some differences between groups in the scope of the changes the students made to their practice over their senior years of schooling; in the amount of effort they expended to master the processes and procedures they encountered; their seeming willingness to persevere with the challenges essential to enact their PEP; and the extent of their ownership and management of PEP. Thus it can be argued that the advances the students made in their PEP and the associated development of their capabilities had a considerable influence on their personal efficacy for self-development.

Student's Efficacy Expectations

Coherent understanding of the story that these self-development patterns tell can be found in the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy can affect effort, choice of activities and persistence (Schunk & Pajares, 2009). In consisting of both an efficacy expectation (the belief in ability to perform the desired behaviour) and an outcome expectation (the belief that the behaviour will have a desirable effect) the personal beliefs of the students emerged as significant. Thus the students' sense of autonomy and perceptions of autonomy support around their PEP was integral in the development of self-efficacy (Reeve, 2002).

While all students in the present study believed in their ability to engage with their PEP, the level of this efficacy expectation showed a noted difference among the three groups. The literature suggests that indeed the extent of one's efficacy beliefs can differ (Bandura, 1977). For example one student's efficacy expectations could be limited to simple tasks associated with a goal whereas another expectation to perform might be the most complex of tasks related to, for example, assessing university pathways for a conjoint degree. In this respect the efficacy expectations of the disengaged students appeared to be limited to the sharing of their learning goals with their teachers and parents, and managing their data. They did not expect to foster agency and autonomy around their future pathways or even at times their academic pathways at school. The belief of the semi-engaged students in their capabilities to organise and execute a course of action required for PEP was greater. Like

the disengaged students they recognised the need to set and achieve goals and to manage their academic pathways. Additionally the semi-engaged students appeared to seek commitment to and understanding of the overall rationale for their PEP and many in this group had a general understanding of their efficiencies as learners. Nonetheless these students seemed more worried than the disengaged students about how they were compromising the quality of expected performance with their off task behaviours. Whilst the semi-engaged students understood that education plans were critical preparation for the future (Ockerman et al., 2013) and talked with some conviction about their ability to manage their goals and data, they were far less sure of their ability to have agency and autonomy over their future pathways. In contrast, the engaged students felt they were growing in confidence and competence in regards to all of these aspects of PEP. Driving this responsibility did not come from their parents, caregivers or teachers but was an obligation they developed personally.

The three students interviewed in Phase Two of this study highlight their individual experiences of these processes in all its richness and variety. The backdrop of survey results provide a consistent reference to and understanding of the students' attitudes towards PEP across the seven criteria as they are expected to move from dependence, to interdependence and finally independence. Their personal encounters with the PEP system were also made up of the milieu of particular lives. Schunk and Miller (2002) have drawn attention to students feeling efficacious when persuaded that they are capable of learning by a trustworthy source. The teachers in the study had strategically resolved to relate more appropriately to students, with Te Kotahitanga and the philosophy of the school providing a good foundation. The disengaged and semi-engaged students found support in their learning leaders, whānau tutors, school teachers and parents for their self-efficacy (Anderman, 2013). While their families and teachers were clearly important to the engaged students in their PEP in general, they mostly found their sources of efficacy from within. In contrast some of the semi-engaged and disengaged students derived their expectations of personal efficacy from their teachers who helped lead the students to believing they could successfully make changes to practice, particularly with areas in which they had not previously been confident. In this respect Sonny was typical of the disengaged group in that he had constructed his own beliefs about his capabilities so even if told he was capable, he did not believe it (Turner & Patrick, 2004). It was Sonny's English teacher who was able to build Sonny as capable and powerful in overcoming his difficulties with essay writing through positive feedback while allowing Sonny ownership of the process. As the students became more engaged they

perceived more support from teachers and peers, creating a cycle of increased levels of engagement (Furrer, Skinner, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2006; Osterman, 1998). This was the case with Mereana. The importance of affective connections at school such as a sense of belonging, a sense of relatedness, and identification with school is also highlighted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Hence the significance of persistence and effort, particularly when confronted with difficulties, is an indicator of the strength of efficacy expectations. In this study there was variation between the semi-engaged students and the engaged students in regard to mastery experience. Successes experienced previously impacted on the students' capabilities when facing a particular challenge. Fundamentally, the semi-engaged and engaged students' interpretations of their mastery experiences could either weaken or strengthen their efficacy expectations. As Bandura (1977) has contended, "weak expectancies are easily extinguishable by disconfirming experiences, whereas individuals who possess strong expectations of mastery will persevere in their coping efforts, despite disconfirming experiences" (p. 194).

The semi-engaged and disengaged students' descriptions of their mastery experiences suggested that they could be disconfirming and hence their mastery expectations were weakened. When talking about the unevenness of their practices around their PEP it appeared that when faced with setbacks, the disengaged students and some semi-engaged students prevented themselves from moving forward through questioning and self-doubt. The disengaged students could sometimes appear to have a very robust sense of self-efficacy, thinking for example that just viewing their data enacted adequate PEP progress. This suggests that sometimes their beliefs were inaccurate, giving them an unreliable guide to the nature of reality (Bandura, 1986). At times the semi-engaged students' perceptions of their own capabilities revealed self-doubt. The reactions of these students to disappointing assignment results or the inability to meet a deadline to attain another credit could be significant obstacles. Students in both groups spoke of lessening their efforts, settling for the line of least resistance, and reverting to safe practices often around the off-task habits of their social group, despite knowing that such practices was less than desirable to them. Contextual variables such as peers (Schunk & Mullen, 2013) could bolster academic motivation through maintaining bonds with high achieving friends annoyed by distracting behaviour as was the case with the engaged group (Urdan, 2013). Conversely, peers could have a detrimental effect as demonstrated with the disengaged group who often encouraged

each other to wag classes. Students' motivation is enhanced when they observe peer models who learn by expending effort and persisting further (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). In this vein the engaged students constantly supported each other and extinguished self-doubt. These were noticeable differences between the two groups. For one group self-doubt was a source of empowerment while for others it was debilitating.

The nature of self-doubt in the engaged students' mastery experiences was also different. This was demonstrated in their discourse early in year 12 when the high stakes requirement of the next two years appeared daunting. However their self-doubt lay more in the realisation of the task, rather than in their ability to manage it. In continuing to be optimistic about their ability, they took personal responsibility for improving their practice, believing that increased effort on their part would eventually lead to success. Adjusting their educational pathway for a new prerequisite where necessary, or finding a different approach to learning, were not regarded as insurmountable barriers. Instead the engaged students' commitment to new ways of self-management in their PEP was viewed as achievable so long as they were prepared to expend time and effort. Bandura (1986) advocates that once a decision has been made, the evidence in favour of that decision becomes salient while the evidence against it diminishes. Essentially the engaged students had strength of conviction in their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) that not only affected their willingness to see their NCEA qualification through to completion, but also eliminated self-doubt in galvanising post school decisions.

One of the most powerful means of gaining student commitment to their PEP was providing proof of successful learning obtained through monitoring improved student progress towards identified goals. Providing students with feedback on goal progress and decisions also gave opportunity to raise self-efficacy in the current study (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that heightened self-efficacy improves skills and sustains motivation, with goal setting and self-efficacy having especially powerful influences on self-regulation and academic attainment (Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Goal properties have effects on motivation (Locke & Latham, 2002) and students' performance has also been found to improve with goal intervention programmes (Morisano, Hirsch, Peterson, Pihl, & Shore, 2010). In the current study goal setting embedded in PEP was as an important process in motivating engaged and semi-engaged students in particular and was shown to be a powerful and reliable determinant of action (Bandura, 1988, 1997; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). Based on their descriptions it

appeared that the students in the three groups had a clear understanding of goal orientation, *why* they were doing what they did and goal setting, what they were aiming for (Martin, 2013). Consistent with what is known about the link between setting academic goals and improving grades (Diseth & Kobbeltveldt, 2010; Durik et al., 2009; Harackiewicz et al., 2008) most students in the study used their academic goals in an ongoing way to focus on achieving NCEA credits. Successful and incremental completion of Levels 2 and 3 thus contributed to their personal self-efficacy as learners. Anderman (2013) has contended that a sense of autonomy is manifested in students when they engage in tasks and activities that reflect their personal values. While the engaged students' academic goals tended to include personal values and aspirations, it was the self-management and personal goals that the disengaged and semi-engaged students recorded in their diaries that they often referred to. In this respect they gained a sense of themselves as individuals rather than because they were being compelled or coerced to do so or made to feel guilty.

Mereana, Ra and Sonny all had personal best goals. Personal best goals reflect a mastery orientation because they are self-referenced and self-improvement based. They also have a component of performance orientation in that the student is competitive, but with his or her own previous performance (Martin, 2013). The data management system, with its transparent access to individual progress through the pie graph promoted this orientation in a regular and tangible way. Similar to other disengaged students in his group and of his own admission, Sonny lacked goal clarity especially when confronted with obstacles leading to low self-efficacy (Grant & Dweck, 2003). Nonetheless it was goal setting to gain the literacy credits his mother desired so much for him, that enabled Sonny to achieve and overcome the seeds of disengagement that had already been sown, at least for some of his final year at school. Ra's PB goals had helped him win his scholarship which was a staged process of his goal setting. In this way self-efficacy was substantiated, as the learners in this study observed progress towards their goals, which conveyed that they were becoming skilful (Schunk & Pajares, 2009). Mereana's developing PB goals had a positive effect on her engagement including educational aspirations, persistence, class participation which then led to enjoyment. The assessment driven nature of NCEA was challenging for Mereana. While she was able to gain her academic goal of Level 2, she was not able to attain the narrowly circumscribed credits of her history class even though her understanding of Māori history appeared to be deeper than that of many of her classmates. This draws attention to the dual demands of the so called open curriculum of the 'producer' NZC and of

a closely prescribed NCEA assessment system with particular taboos that did not allow Mereana to do things differently.

Differences in student mindsets and interests affected motivation. Some disengaged students with fixed mindsets accepted that capabilities were set and not a lot could be changed, whereas students with growth mindsets linked ability with learning (Dweck, 2006). A principle of motivational systems theory in the literature which has particular relevance for PEP in this study, is that facilitation rather than control should be the way to motivate individuals though a focus on their goals, beliefs, personal agency, and emotions (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). While goal-driven activities were initiated and sustained through academic advisement, Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) have contended that it is effort, persistence, and achievement which formulate the outcomes of motivation in schooling. In the current study it was the engaged students who were more likely to have adaptive approaches to learning so that they could learn more and perform better (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). This draws further attention to the benefits and ways in which motivation was enhanced for the disengaged and semi-engaged students. This came in the form of offering rationales for PEP (for example links to certain types of careers) and discussions of the importance and utility value of their work (Schunk et al., 2013). Gaining a particular prerequisite for their future work was an incentive for students to stay at school. As a consequence of their sense of self-efficacy at mastering the goal of completing school, the students were more enthusiastic about showing a commitment to lifelong learning. Confidence about their ability to achieve further lifelong learning goals, whether formal qualifications or general aspirations, was part of their discourse.

Lifelong Learning Power

Pintrich (2003) and Schunk and Zimmerman (2003) have stressed that as well as motivation for learning, promoting learning through an energised internal state also sustains future learning. Most students demonstrated a commitment to becoming more educated in the future and embracing lifelong learning in some form or another. The forward thinking culture in the school, exemplifying assertiveness and independence, established a catalyst for growth mindsets. All of the students in the study saw possibilities rather than limits for their futures in the exosystem, even if in the case of some students, the nature of these possibilities had not been formed.

A number of the engaged students appeared to regard learning itself as 'learnable' with a high capacity for lifelong learning. The view that learning is a lifelong process was also

shared by some of the disengaged and semi-engaged students who acknowledged the processes of growing, changing and adapting in their futures. Those students who found it difficult to talk about lifelong learning appeared to believe their ability to learn was fixed and seemed to avoid learning that appeared difficult for fear that it would show their learning limitations.

Learner characteristics of the engaged students around their PEP were demonstrated by their desire to find things out about their future options. In general the engaged students did not participate actively with the Careers Centre in their senior school years, preferring to search out information on the internet themselves, or seek advice from relevant experts. The Careers Centre was more of a checklist for this group of students. While they were not averse to toying with new ideas for their future, in the main they had already formulated their impending directions through purposeful, systematic thinking. They liked to know how they were going to proceed. Nevertheless their talk conveyed an ‘opportunity, go anywhere, do anything, aim high’ stage of their development.

In contrast the semi-engaged students made reference to having less certainty about their future educational plans. They were not always able to make sense of the links between their current and future pathways in terms of their own insight and experience which sometimes made it difficult to place new knowledge about PEP into a larger picture. Nonetheless their school goals were bound up with their perceptions of themselves as learners and the majority had felt staying at secondary school for five years was achievable. Of the three groups, the semi-engaged students were possibly the most anxious as to what might happen when they left school. In many cases immediate post-school solutions were only partially formed, although the semi-engaged students were more prepared to look towards the more distant future. Many gained university entry level requirements so that if they wanted to engage more rigorously with academic pathways ahead, they would be able to do so when they were ready. While they accessed the Careers Centre and placed some importance on accumulating information about their future plans, they were not always inclined to pull it all together in ways that made sense to them.

The disengaged students played with ideas about their future, often without in-depth understanding of how PEP could fit together effectively for them. Ideas could bubble up without being supported by scaffolded learning pathways. For Sonny this range could include Gym Trainer, Park Ranger or Teacher. Nonetheless the familiarity of their discourse with PEP indicated that the disengaged students did not seem to have a piecemeal

understanding of the processes and procedures that could support them in the school. It was enacting steps to their future, even visiting the Careers Centre that proved a challenge. They treated their future PEP like their learning; they did not always want ownership of it. A possible explanation for this is that they were discouraged when confronted with difficulties in their learning, which then affected their educational planning. This could mean that they opted for solutions to their future pathways that were routine rather than of interest to them. The disengaged students depended on their teachers and external structures for their sense of self-esteem, sometimes becoming passive absorbers rather than active agents.

Agency through Self-regulation

A proliferation of literature has explored what might contribute to an effective model of self-regulation, particularly in terms of motivation to attain goals (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, 2002). In this study there was an expectation that it was the students' responsibility to work out what moves to make and what strategies to employ to effect improvement and carry out their PEP in a self-directed way. The degree to which the students regulated aspects of their motivation, behaviour and thinking as self-regulated learners (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) also drew from personal accomplishments such as a Māori Achievement award or formal acknowledgement from teachers as noted through their diaries. Seemingly to sustain momentum, particularly for the engaged students, the self-reflection phase needed to occur after pivotal points in their PEP performance (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Data conversations were often the first step in reflecting on their learning histories and addressing possible issues. From the engaged students' perspectives, regularly viewing data was not so much a priority as for the other two groups, possibly because they knew where they were at, preferring to seek clarity about the bigger picture. However reflecting on their data incentivised the semi-engaged group to self-evaluate their entire performance around their PEP in an ongoing way. For the engaged students a critically reflective lens helped them to examine their practice, expand their knowledge and widen their choices. This gave them 'permission' to question, challenge and seek alternative approaches to deal with their PEP more effectively. Changing students' beliefs about learning involves fostering the belief that competence or ability is a changeable, controllable aspect of development (Schunk et al., 2013) and in this respect self-reflection played a critical role in the students' PEP. Without such knowledge students could not identify where they needed to be headed, how they were achieving, where they needed to go to next and how to close their learning gaps (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The Contextual Variables of Agency

Agency might be evident in a given situation, but it cannot be assumed that agency always denotes improvement. The three students in Phase Two had different contextual variables depending on what was going on in their microsystems that affected the level and degree of agency they had over their PEP. The students' positive emotions expanded their possibilities and enabled them to think differently about themselves and their PEP practices, and to act differently as a consequence. Throughout their discourse, from the early Phase One interview over the course of the next eighteen months, it was possible to identify significant changes in Ra and Mereana's sense of agency, and to a lesser extent that of Sonny.

Sonny had a supportive home microsystem, but while his mother was keen for him to complete five years of schooling, in his final year he gradually disconnected from school (Finn, 1989). Earlier patterns of avoidance (see Dweck, 1986) had been evident in his PEP. Sonny's attributional patterns of mastery often demonstrated an 'entity' view of ability with low effort, expectations and persistence (Dweck, 2006). In an attempt to protect his self-esteem, Sonny could sometimes over-estimate his ability and under-estimate the task. On other occasions, and by his own admission, Sonny linked confidence with his knowledge. Given his increasingly poor attendance resulting in inadequate deep factual and conceptual curricula ideas, this resulted in low confidence and led to low self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) argued that changes in self-efficacy only come through evidence that disrupts people's beliefs in their capabilities. A triggering event that enhanced Sonny's self-efficacy was the intervention of his learning leader in English who encouraged him to repeat his literacy standards and gain Level 2 entrance to university. This ownership was important to Sonny because of his mother's aspirations, but Sonny's agency over his PEP was sporadic.

Mereana's early beliefs about not being able to concentrate on her academic subjects were disrupted through her improved attitude to PEP and incremental successes at school such as gaining certificates, completing school and gaining an award at the end of year prize giving ceremony. While Mereana's complex home microsystem sometimes positioned her in survival mode, making planning for the future difficult (Higgins & Nairn, 2014), she was able to exert agency over these difficulties and focus on her schooling. Far from being disconfirming, her difficulties spurred her into a positive agentic mindset. Nonetheless it was a particular challenge for Mereana to live in the contradiction of her parents' lives, on the one hand trying to please them in her studies, but also getting told to get out of school and get a job on the other. A poignant moment that triggered her self-management and

agency was when she got to the point of responding to her parents' suggestion with, *'you just leave me alone for what I want to do'*.

Ra had a stronger and more resilient consciousness of his agency than the other two students. This is consistent with what is known about those with strong beliefs about their own capabilities. His home microsystem also reflected this optimism through a belief that his educational journey would be transformative. Ra demonstrated strong expectations of mastery which led to perseverance with coping effects, despite disconfirming experiences on occasion that he was able to 'play down'. Bandura (1987) has argued that the more varied the circumstances in which the mastery occurs, the more likely are success experiences to authenticate self-efficacy. In Ra's case, experiencing success through considerable perseverance in a multiplicity of contexts contributed to his strong sense of agency. An increasing body of research supports the prediction that self-monitoring of achievement beliefs stimulates achievement and sustains learning efforts (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998, 2003; Zimmerman Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Ra could see himself into the future as confident, empowered and prepared to take risks.

Scaffolding Agency

The students talked about their tutor and whānau leader's ability to notice, recognise and respond to their PEP as identification of next steps and ways forward were shared. Sadler's (1998) notion that feedback on performance is specifically intended to generate, improve and accelerate learning was most commonly attended to at these daily whānau tutor meetings. Seemingly the semi-engaged and engaged students had the most to gain from these meetings, which often functioned through asking the right questions in passing, making a casual reference, or assisting with the next learning step. This all depended however, on the degree of the whānau tutor's involvement. Similarly, the HSP and ILC were a conduit for bringing a number of PEP processes together for dialogic opportunities to address how best to improve performance (Sadler, 1989). Learning leaders (particularly through ILC diary/ passport access) were further integrative links to PEP who were sought out, particularly by the engaged students. Hence it can be argued that all of these structures helped to contribute to and maintain a scaffolding function for student agency. Moreover their regular occurrence allowed for identification and mediation of circumstances when self-efficacy was low, and self-management of PEP floundering.

According to Strayhorn (2013), self-efficacy, motivation, and specifically a sense of belonging can play an important role in academic achievement. Each of the three students

had met the set minimum government requirement of attaining NCEA Level 2, with Ra exceeding this. For the students in this study, a sense of belonging to their school was also an important dimension of their education trajectories. Sonny, Mereana and Ra were universal in their love and enjoyment of school. These priority learners were also culturally located in a system where theirs was the dominant culture and culturally responsive practices and dimensions of the schools' philosophy were embedded in authentic and meaningful ways. The students did not merely belong to structures and systems but instead could claim ownership, and for this reason their PEP came to mean much more.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter significant attention has been given to the examination of teachers' parents' and priority learners' experiences of PEP and how these have impacted on their understandings and practices. Consideration has been given to the political and socio-cultural context of the school where processes and procedures that make up an educational trajectory, and conditions such as the kaupapa of the school that enhance PEP, are examined. In drawing attention to these systems, parents' roles and partnerships are highlighted and the capabilities of the students in self-managing their PEP considered.

Discussion has then focused on optimal conditions under which effective PEP could be operationalised. It has been argued that leadership and relational trust, and collective teacher efficacy have influenced new practices associated with PEP. Furthermore it has been contended that a programmatic approach generated and produced consequences that required the students to exercise some measure of self-management over their PEP. Differences and similarities in the students' evaluative and productive engagement were highlighted as Bronfenbrenner's (1986, 1989) ecological systems theory was used to frame responses, understandings and practices. An argument has been presented that students' efficacy beliefs were influential in regard to the amount of effort they expended to master their PEP when faced with self-doubt.

The effect of self-efficacy on motivation and their combined influence on self-regulation has then been given consideration. The complexity of contextual variables, fostering the belief that competence or ability is a changeable, controllable aspect of development is highlighted through a discussion of the three students' espoused beliefs, practices and capabilities. A strong argument is made that the students' sense of belonging to the school and affirming relationships with teachers helped them to persevere with challenges. The

impact of the students' agency in monitoring their PEP more knowledgably has then been illustrated.

The Next Chapter

In the final chapter of this thesis conclusions are drawn. Looking to the future, implications of the findings are discussed in regard to the implementation of PEP and twenty-first century secondary school contexts. Areas for future research are identified. The chapter concludes by outlining the contribution the current study makes to the field.

CHAPTER NINE

PEP: A Programme in Search of an Identity

Secondary schools today are increasingly complex. As key agents of change there is hope and optimism for the futures of young people within them. This study has built on research that focuses on the importance of information, guidance and understanding, regarding secondary students' educational pathways. A global emphasis on higher education, post-school employment and lifelong learning has meant that schools need to be skilful in optimising their learners' PEP. They also need a vision which is responsive, inclusive and above all empowering so that students can take up that vision and manage their PEP themselves. The two stories in the study, one about the learners and the other about the school have revealed how that happened.

Central to this investigation through students' voices has been a focus on describing and attempting to better understand their beliefs, perceptions and experiences of PEP as they have navigated new systems and procedures, and developed associated capabilities on their journey through senior school. The voices of their teachers and parents have supported this understanding of the senior school context and the alignment of the school's philosophy with its practices have been analysed to form the backdrop of the study. To address the aims of the study focus has been on the students' evolving engagement with PEP and the enhancement of learning. Consideration has been given to the students' conceptions of agency within the PEP process and the degree of ownership they have taken in self-managing their educational pathways at school and beyond. Attention has been paid to finding out the differences between the students in regard to their levels of engagement and to seek understandings about the bases of these.

Expecting More from Secondary Schools

Perceptions and intended purposes of PEP developed in the secondary school have been influenced by historical developments in education in New Zealand and the current macro policy environment. As was argued in Chapter Two, New Zealand's national education system has a history of differentiated educational provision, with such cross-cutting social factors as class and ethnic background at its core (Shuker, 1987). Practices from the past, while not determining subsequent development, will provide both possibilities and limitations for the present. Equality has not been about providing the same education to all students, and diversity of student achievement and outcome, has been accepted as a natural

outcome of the educational experience. The promise of education concerning the acquisition of qualifications and subsequent employment opportunities has been controlled by larger structural forces and agendas, and has dictated the nature of the relationships between young people and their educational pathways. Secondary schools might have had high expectations for themselves and for all of their students but the reality of realising these hopes has fallen far short. Many students within the education system have had unclear visions about how to plan for their time in school and how to make appropriate connections to their longer life span. Experiencing blocked choices and other such impediments has frequently resulted in unmet needs.

Major changes in the international youth labour market when western economies have been re-shaped for primarily economic and political reasons, have bound students to stay at school for longer, and have left secondary schools vulnerable to critiques of educational failure. Within this context, disengagement from school emerged as a phenomenon previously concealed by labour market opportunities. Accompanying this phenomenon have been the complex and compelling relationships and stressors between education and poverty in New Zealand (see for example Carpenter & Osborne, 2014) which have made the challenges for schools like the one in this study all the more pronounced. Moreover, once students arrive at school, schools are asked to make improvements in attainment and growth, notwithstanding the fact that the implications of the challenges they are attempting to meet are even more pronounced at the family and community levels. An individual relationship to schooling shapes the type of learner they become and the type of economy they participate in (Hayes, 2012). This study comes at a time when interest in increasing levels of attainment of priority learners is high. Successfully achieving a secondary school qualification which in New Zealand is officially sanctioned as NCEA Level 2 (Middleton, 2011), gives students a greater opportunity of completing one further post-secondary qualification which in turn has the potential to earn more, through employment, towards a family sustaining wage (Earl, 2010; Scott, 2009). Though contestable, this fits with the promise of the knowledge economy that educational attainment will lead in a straightforward way to desired employment (Higgins & Nairn, 2014). In this study, the student's being first in family to attend university had a profound effect on entire families.

Comparable to the international context, New Zealand achievement gaps continue to be reported as persistent realities of educational life. New Zealand's 'Pisa Gap' (Dale, 2014) and the publicity it has gained have contributed to the current conception of equity in the

New Zealand secondary school policymaking environment, which focuses on achievement and other measurable outputs. Now that the mission and roles of the education system have become more clearly defined, there is an expectation that secondary school students will assume greater self-management responsibilities over the course of their school careers. The reality for students in this study is that they now have to deal with a more complex set of transitions than their predecessors, alongside measures of accountability created to track the effectiveness of their choices around their learning and educational planning. Students have therefore come to expect more from their secondary school than they did in the past. While achievement and other quantitative factors of change are important, the school in this study demonstrated that it could move beyond the emphasis on the achievement gap to encompass broader, more inclusive notions of learning and educational planning. In this respect Orua College uniquely positioned itself to address the benefits of scaffolding the educational trajectories of its students. The students and teachers in this study saw the opportunity gap and all that it could bring.

Leveraging the PEP Resource

Moving from a macrosystem discussion to a school-based one, opportunity came first in the form of creating a philosophy and building a twenty-first century school that could incorporate their purposes through new fields of emerging research. A major issue for teachers and leaders in challenging contexts is to support the development of a culture that is continually seeking to identify and implement systems that are most likely to work. A particular focus was to promote learners' capabilities and agency around their schoolwork. In this study it is argued that systems and procedures need to be closely tethered to developing capabilities. What is apparent in the contemporary literature and the investigation into the PEP embraced by this school, is that systems and procedures cannot be enacted by simply grafting an isolated initiative on to current schooling arrangements (Mitchell et al., 2010). They have to be authentic so that schools can make productive decisions about what a strategic programme of PEP might consist of. There is a danger that new processes and procedures are introduced with little accompanying change to the status quo in regard to roles and responsibilities assigned to teachers and students.

Formulating new supporting processes and procedures such as the Independent Learning Centre was a way of working from the centre for Orua College. That is, a number of other processes were generated by the Centre such as unit standards on metacognition, at the same time as responsibility for independent study, reflection and access to learning leaders

through the homework diary took place. As a traditional system reinvented, the homework diary became a passport to learning leaders in independent learning time; a record for academic, personal and self-managing goals; a place where classroom learning was reflected upon and a repository for commendations from teachers. The overarching requirement for these systems and procedures was that they interface with the students in such a way that the students develop certain capabilities to work effectively in them. Use of disaggregated data within the school, monitoring individual student progress and achievement, setting individual and school-wide goals, and instituting intensive academic advisement counselling for students, became a significance focus. The reality of producing independent, self-regulated learners required the teachers to develop a partnership with the students and their parents giving both greater control over various facets of the PEP process. Students needed to develop the interpersonal skills required to succeed beyond school. The evidence from the present study strongly suggests that those who took control could become self-sustaining learners who had life options before them. PEP was not just about preparing students to get to university and the workplace, but also preparing them to succeed once they were there.

Inextricably implicated into a good PEP system such as that in this study were synergising effects which took account of the life circumstances and life challenges of the students. As teachers in the study understood, PEP did not exist in isolation. In advocating for all students to reach their full potential and stay at school, there was an acknowledgement that what the students knew, did, and cared about could change in meaning as they progressed through school. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's framework it is concluded that what the learner brings to the PEP situation through various phases of development, attitudes and beliefs, can be significantly modified by the school. If students were to make mistakes they still needed to feel they could engage and belong, and the mistake could be righted (often through a restorative justice process). In this sense the school's institutional habitus had a synergising influence on the students' educational trajectories. A further integrative link was the reinforcement of the students' own cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996) in the school's domain. This was another way to manifest student agency and to leverage resources so that the transition through school could be a smooth and supportive process.

Convergent Rather than Divergent: Teachers, Parents, Students

In the following section attention is paid to the more detailed findings in the study and their implications. In the first instance teacher, parent and student agency is discussed in relation to implications for an active and collaborative partnership.

Teacher Agency

The Principal was instrumental in encouraging teachers in the school to be key conduits for PEP and embrace changing roles and responsibilities, thus realising knowledge gains. Such gains were aimed at building capability for continuous improvement in raising student outcomes. The principal was also a catalyst for integrating educational knowledge into practice where specific local solutions were sought for complex problems (Hayes, 2011). There was an expectation from senior leadership within the school that teachers be prepared to examine and where necessary modify their beliefs and practices which could sometimes prove challenging. However the sound relational trust that underpinned this process was strengthening for them. Teachers' collective efficacy beliefs were also influential in regard to the amount of perseverance they demonstrated in supporting their students. A consequence of this collective efficacy was that some teachers persisted in their own personal efforts to be effective, going the extra distance for their students (Bandura, 1998). Teacher engagement in the students' PEP contributed to teacher status, satisfaction and effectiveness. They encouraged student future aspirations and extolled their potential. How skilled they were in assessing career readiness in tune with the latest university and career developments or which Gateway programmes might be the best option, was less clear. As others in the field have noted, a key emergent feature in helping students to enact their PEP in agentic ways was that teachers' develop a strong relationship with their students (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hawk et al., 2010). This relationship needed to be learner-focused as well as soft and hard caring, requiring both holistic and targeted support. Students appeared to need at least one strong adult advocate in the school, whether a learning leader or a whānau tutor (Bottoms & Feagin, 2003). In terms of their academic progress, teacher engagement with students was crucial in supporting their understandings of the standard or goal they were aiming for, to enable them to compare their performance with the standard and engage in appropriate action that would lead to some closure of their learning gap (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). As Sadler (1989) contended, this could best be developed through a shared dialogical understanding between student and teacher. This responsibility fell to the whānau leader as academic counsellor, helping with

data-driven decision-making, goal setting and systematically keeping students on track for success year after year. However, for matters other than academic progress, the whānau leader or tutor was not always the preferred advocate for all students. Other teachers were also sought out by the students to provide a whole-picture overview of the student themselves, important information about their family circumstances, social and emotional development, and further issues related to success at school. The students understood that by doing this they could gather useful advice which could help them better adapt and succeed within the school environment.

The engaged students who were independent anyway, often sought this kind of support from their learning leaders and sometimes it was just one teacher outside of the whānau with whom the disengaged students connected and confided. It was therefore the semi-engaged and some of the disengaged students over whom whānau tutors had the most influence. While the future destination of these students was often less defined, there were other capabilities and confidences the teachers encouraged that were a potential source of strength and traction for the educational trajectories of these students beyond school.

Parent Agency

Another way in which teachers' in this study were important catalysts for impacting on the students' PEP was that the teachers were instrumental in involving parents in the educational environment of the school. In a sense they bridged the gap between the practices of the school community and those of their parent community. Teachers' capacity to work collaboratively in their parent communities included an approach that was more learning focused and systematic, and less reliant on more ad hoc links such as information or meeting the parents evenings, and sports ground conversations. For whānau leaders and some tutors this entailed offering individualised services to families in the form of a home visit about their child's progress. All of the teachers in this study reached out to students' families in the evenings and weekends by emailing them when they had concerns, or to praise to encourage the students' academic growth, and sometimes to reinforce socially appropriate behaviours.

Contingent upon lines of communication being established, parents in the study took advantage of the opportunity to have their emails responded to directly and with clarity. Hence, parents, students and teachers were on the same page in supporting the students' PEP in an ongoing way, and eliminating potential surprises at the HSP meetings. This was an important platform, in the first instance formally sanctioning the need for home-school

partnerships, and then asking parents to take more responsibility for the success of their child's learning. As well as parents improving their understanding of NCEA in regard to their child's accomplishments and challenges, the parents were uniquely positioned to contextualise the organisational conditions of the school's PEP for generating their own feedback. This could incorporate information in regard to what their child had achieved, where improvement might be necessary, and what their child's future pathways might be. Moreover the HSP was a good mechanism for parents and teachers to observe the student as an autonomous self-manager of their learning, and a place where students could formally reflect on their PEP.

The HSP provided important insights for creating the ongoing cycles of feedback necessary for students to become self-monitoring and self-regulatory in their PEP. Tightly focused on the progress of each individual student, data in the HSP stimulated dialogue about learning with its integrative link through the parent portal. These data conversations also served to underpin whanau/community dialogue about school data, learning and PEP on a broader scale implying a more sophisticated analysis was attended to, of how achievement outcome gains are secured. Parents embraced this opportunity at Orua College organising their own committees, such as the Maori Achievement Committee. In regard to these findings, it is concluded that such initiatives underscore the need to generate opportunities for deeper changes in the culture of the school so that involvement of parents in their child's learning is multifaceted, participatory and transformative.

Student Agency

This study has highlighted the fact that the students' voices offered invaluable insights into their worlds but also showed how capable they were in analysing their PEP. As well as continuing to be sources of information as active respondents (Fielding, 2006), over the period of the study their voices became legitimated around conversations related to teaching, learning and their PEP (Fielding, 2012). Similar to the students in Bishop and Berryman's Te Kotahitanga study (2006) Ra, Mereana and to a lesser degree Sonny, revealed self-insight and self-understanding, suggesting they were confident in securing ownership of their PEP trajectories. In understanding this, it is necessary to recognise that the students also had a voice in their school and could influence their educational experience, which in itself was a powerful tool to increase their agency over their learning and PEP (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012).

The students were able to monitor their PEP knowledgably. In addition to scoping progress against statistical indicators, the NCEA assessment structure in the senior school also allowed students to judge themselves against their individual abilities. This latter dimension was a good fit for the ethos of PEP. In many respects the explicit nature of the schools' PEP systems interfaced well with the explicit expectations of NCEA. Hence it is contended that the students could self-manage gaining their NCEA credits at the same time as drawing on various PEP structures to support this process. However, it has been argued that students' efficacy beliefs were influential in regard to the scope of changes and the amount of effort they expended on their PEP. In experiencing self-efficacy at school it was likely the students would seek self-efficacious interactions and have ownership over later experiences (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). All three students appeared to be knowledgeable about how and under what conditions they best learned, but in Mereana's case, there was probably scope to know more. Sonny could see no credible progression to higher qualifications from the narrow constraints of his subject pathway and choices. Perhaps stronger advocacy from his whanau tutor and parents would have helped here to broaden his focus and increase the potential of future career trajectories for Sonny. Poor subject choices were not uncommon in the case of other disengaged students who could have benefited from further layers of specific and targeted academic guidance. Attention must be paid to the special case of disengaged students where it is argued there is potential to have the greatest impact in terms of well managed PEP, learning and achievement. The need to direct additional resources into these students' educational progress is highlighted, and given the findings that engaged students assume independence early, there is potential to allow resources to be redistributed. Schools can either reinforce alienation and disengagement or they can work to develop educational environments that are more conducive to interests and experiences of disenfranchised students (Hayes, 2012). This is a commentary about a school that attempts to do that.

There is no doubting the optimism expressed by all the students about possibilities for their futures. How much this optimism can be attributed to the accumulative impact of their PEP over their senior school years, is a significant issue. For many, feelings of personal satisfaction and success drew from feeling more enthusiastic about their learning as well as their PEP, and exemplified their commitment to continued learning. Others who had not fully explored themselves as learners appeared to make links between the positive emotions they experienced and increased self-esteem, gained though staying at school for five years.

For many of the students, meaningful ownership of their PEP gave them the agency to seize opportunities their school provided.

Forming programme identity

This richly detailed evolving partnership between the teachers, parents and students in the study is a complex network made up of interlocking elements rather than discrete entities. PEP as it has operated in this school is strategic, but its outcome has not been predetermined. Although a strong system, and developing student and teacher capabilities have been required to deliver it as an effective programme, PEP is possibly still not fully formed and more relatively open and fluid. The reasons for this appear to be two-fold. Firstly it was developed from the beginning in an organic way as a specifically local adaptation with framed intentions. In this respect further layers were implemented with local meaning making (Hayes, 2011). Sahlberg has identified such continual adjustment as an essential part of schooling (2011). Secondly PEP, the overall picture of how a student navigates their pathway at school and beyond, has never been acknowledged as a single transparent entity in New Zealand, as it has for example in the well-performing Finnish system. Under the Basic Education Act of 1998 Finnish secondary students must have two hours of career and academic guidance each week.

Research has highlighted that PEP implementation gaps exist in New Zealand. Particular challenges in career delivery are evident (see for e.g., Vaughan & O'Neil, 2010; ERO, 2012). In the current school the careers staff deployed their existing roles and systems to serve the students in a variety of ways. However, apart from 3D episodes at junior level, there was no compulsion for students to utilise their services. Herein lay the difficulty for careers delivery. The ASCA American model, which maximises the impact of counselling across America by having an academic counsellor in every school, is one possible way forward. This counsellor could work with one foot in the careers door and another grounded in the network of the school. The counsellor's attendance at HSP meetings might be beneficial, given that parents appeared to be largely left out of the careers loop at Orua College, despite career information evenings. Attention needs to be paid to how component parts work together in PEP so that if relevant systems such as careers are to be reorganised, this is done in a systematic rather than fragmented way. In another school situation PEP might emerge differently and alter direction as schools seize new opportunities and react to challenges by assembling new ideas, resources and interests.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

This research aimed to provide a rich description of the nature of opportunities a school can provide for students to develop skills and expertise associated with PEP. As was explained in Chapter Four, a deliberate decision was made to delimit the research by focusing on just one school. Hence an investigation across a range of schools of PEP processes which incorporates a comparative approach to examining the perceptions of students, parents and teachers would make a valuable contribution to the field. This could consider comparisons across a range of school types as determined by such factors as decile rating, single sex or co-educational, public or private, for example.

Research that investigates in detail what is actually happening in secondary schools for priority learners comes at a time when interest in their attainment at school, post-school and in post-secondary qualifications is high. However published research based on what teachers, students and parents have to say about actual experiences at school and practices of PEP are small-scale in nature (for exceptions, (see for e.g., Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Madjar & McKinley, 2010). Thus there is a need for more in-depth qualitative studies documenting New Zealand students' experiences of PEP within a range of age groups at school and across a range of contexts such as Gateway. In particular there is a need to further investigate parents' contribution to the learning partnership and explore the potential move in parental agency in secondary schools from attendance to participation. Teachers' and students' efficacy beliefs around PEP and how they influence and frame future learning are further aspects that would make a valuable contribution to the field. Another potentially useful avenue for research would be to look further longitudinally. In this study students were followed within school. It would be interesting and instructive to follow students out into their post- secondary environment and trace any links to their PEP experiences within the secondary environment

This study has taken the position that attributing resilience to certain students would make them all seem special because they aligned with other dominant group norms. For this reason it was never an intention to measure or even explore resilience as an explanatory device in interpreting the ways the students overcame difficulties they encountered in their academic and personal lives. This is a dimension of understanding that may be of interest to future researchers.

As discussed in Chapter Four, no one research paradigm is intrinsically better than another. It is acknowledged that utilising a qualitative approach with a nested quantitative

component has provided a rich description of the phenomenon under investigation from the participants' perspectives (Candy, 1989). Additionally the survey questionnaire, by focusing more closely on the practices of the students allowed a greater breadth of understanding. The development of similar survey questionnaires would be useful starting points for schools to ascertain the levels of their students' engagement in their schooling from their entry at year 9. The school in this study administered the questionnaire across the entire school, using the information for further PLD, highlighting the mutually beneficial effects of school-university partnerships. As suggested by Mitchell et al., (2010) this could be a fruitful way forward, in other contexts.

Concluding comments

As well as addressing the question of whether there should be greater awareness on the part of students and schools as to how PEP is conceptualised as a programme, this thesis recasts the debate to ask how to better leverage this exceptional resource together. Research has shown that in some schools there is an unclear set of variables around the opportunities schools provide for students to develop skills and expertise associated with personal educational planning, alongside a lack of accountability for students to negotiate those pathways successfully. The challenge for New Zealand secondary schools is to identify a nationally co-ordinated system of PEP that ensures coherence and transparency for students, whilst remaining locally crafted in order to make the best use of particular school and community resources. Schools need to be highly strategic with their existing resources, taking care to examine whether there are underutilised systems, procedures and expertise in their school structures that would provide support and belonging-and give these an identity. The students' voices and those of their parents and teachers in this study, offer critical insights into future possibilities and ways forward which could be applied to all schools. Sonny, Mereana and Ra might come from a school of priority learners but their beliefs and experiences of PEP have relevance for all global learners. In the same way the story of their school is one that could resonate with others.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Phase One Interview Schedule



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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PHASE ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Students

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

Indicative questions/areas

Can you tell me a little about yourself as a student? (How long have you been at this school? How would you describe yourself as a student – conscientious, hard-working, engaged with your studies sometimes, unmotivated?)

What support have you sought when making decisions about your schoolwork and studies?

Where do you go to get advice about where you are going at school?

What can you tell me about the NCEA/IB/Cambridge subjects and standards you have chosen so far?

(How were choices made? Do you feel quite happy about the subjects you have chosen and how they have turned out so far- why or why not?)

How have you learned about pre-requisites for subjects and how to plan your education? How do you know what subjects help you to get where you want to go? (into a particular course or job beyond school?)

Do you get to see your results throughout the year?

When you look at your own data does this help you to manage and organize yourself-why or why not?

How often do you meet with teachers/deans/ advisors? Do you have peer discussions? Are there any further meetings with your parents as a result?

Apart from knowing standards and learning content and information have you learned how to be a more efficient learner? How do you apply learning skills? Could you give an example? Who has helped with these learning skills?

Do you set goals for yourself/with others around your schoolwork? Who helps you? How are goals developed? Can you give me an example of a goal? How do you think forward?

Have you begun to think about your goals for the future-why-why not? When did this process of thinking about the future start? What do you think life- long learning means?

Do you think that you drive your own learning and organize and manage your studies yourself? If so when did this begin to occur? If not what factors have hindered you?

What do you hope (and plan) to do on leaving school? (What study, training, work or career aims do you have? How do you see the way you are managing and organizing your studies as helping you to get there?)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09 2013 Reference Number 2010/355

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet (Phase 1)



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Phase 1) **Principal/Teachers/Deans /Academic/Careers Counselors/Advisors**

Research project title: **PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING:**
What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

Researcher: Sue Sutherland

I am a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education University of Auckland. I am currently undertaking a research project in fulfilment of a Doctor of Philosophy degree through the University of Auckland. Using a case study approach the aim of the project is to investigate the experiences and perceptions of those involved in personal educational planning at senior secondary school level. Personal educational planning is the process students use to organise and plan for their learning as it unfolds throughout their school career and into the future. Contributing factors in this PEP process can include subject choosing, goal setting, management of data as well as guidance from school advisors and teachers along the way. I would like to invite you to participate in phase one of this research.

Why is the research being conducted?

Secondary school students are expected to navigate their learning, performance and achievement while at school, as well as generate plans for their futures. How students perceive and experience this process and the influence of teachers, deans, advisors, principal and parents is an area that has not been widely investigated in New Zealand. Understanding the nature of opportunities schools, teachers and parents provide for students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully undertake personal educational planning (PEP) is important and can influence future study and work options as well as lifelong learning. Currently, we know that while some students are effective, independent and self-directed learners others find it far more difficult. What we do not know is what factors make it easier and/or more difficult for students to effectively scaffold their educational development. Therefore evidence of individual students' perceptions and experiences will provide relevant insight into how schools can contribute to the best possible educational planning.

Participant recruitment

Your school was selected from a sample of Auckland state secondary schools that met the criteria for the research. Consent for access has been obtained from the school principal, (principal's name). I would like to invite you to be one of the staff participants in the study. I am also seeking to interview 27 secondary school students in Years 11 to 13 (16 years or over) who are enrolled at your school and 6-9 parents/care givers.

Your involvement

Your involvement would consist of one 40-75 minute interview. I seek your permission to audio-tape the interview at your school for ease of transcribing. You can request that the

tape be stopped at any time. Your transcript will be transcribed and you will be given an opportunity to review your transcript for verification and/or amendment. The types of questions I will ask you will be about:

- Your involvement and support of student organisation and planning
- Your understanding of how students navigate their learning, engage with and carry out PEP

In addition to interviews conducted by myself it is anticipated that documents will be sourced such as school policies and information sheets which offer insights into the purposes and nature of your school's personal educational planning process. You may also have documentation that you use with students as part of the educational planning process that you would be willing to share with me.

Project procedures

You may withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation but you cannot withdraw your interview data and any documentary data that you have provided, after **October 27, 2011**. A copy of interview transcripts will be sent to you for verification. You can also indicate if you wish to request a summary of main findings.

To protect participants' confidentiality names of the school and participants will be kept private/not divulged. The names of the participants and the school will not be used in any reports, publications or papers;

Pseudonyms and quotations will be used in a manner that avoids identification. However due to the small number of participants involved, many in key roles such as deans and career advisors are identifiable so complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed as some people may think they can identify particular participants;

Transcripts, consent forms and data will be stored securely for a period of six years and then destroyed. Consent forms stored separately from other data will be kept in a locked cupboard at the Faculty of Education. Data stored electronically will have all identifying information removed so as to be identifiable only by code;

Findings will be used for my doctoral thesis and may also be used for publications and conference presentations;

The principal has given an assurance that any decision to participate or not participate in this project will in no way influence a staff member's employment or standing in the school.

I seek your assurance that the decisions of students whether to participate or not in the research study will not affect their grades or relationships with any staff member.

A summary of findings will be provided if you wish.

Thank you for considering this invitation. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the following:

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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09 2013
Reference Number 2010/355**

Appendix C: Consent Form (Phase 2)



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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CONSENT FORM (Phase 2)

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

Teachers/Deans /Academic/Careers Counselors/Advisors

I, (name) agree to take part in the above research project to be conducted by Sue Sutherland.

I have read the information sheet and understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Participant Information Sheet.

I have had the opportunity to have questions about the project answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time without having to give a reason, and that I can also ask for the information I have provided to be withdrawn from the study up until December 15, 2011.

I understand that the principal has given an assurance that my decision to participate or not participate in this project will in no way influence my employment or standing in the school.

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researcher and the person responsible for the transcription of the interview.

I agree to have the research interview audio-recorded. I understand that I can request that the recorder be switched off at any time throughout the interview.

I agree to interviews about my student (s)' progress being audio-recorded without the researcher being present and allow access to documentation supporting the discussion and meeting about personal educational planning.

I understand transcripts, consent forms and data will be stored securely for a period of six years and then destroyed. Consent forms stored separately from other data will be kept in a locked cupboard at the Faculty of Education. Data stored electronically will have all identifying information removed so as to identifiable only by code;

I understand findings will be used for the researcher's doctoral thesis and may also be used for publications and conference presentations;

I understand that in terms of anonymity of participants where there are only one or two people in positions in the school (ie year 11 dean) it will be difficult to protect identity and participants will be informed of this in the PIS forms.

I understand that the decisions of students whether to participate or not in the research study will not affect their grades or relationships with any staff member.

I would like to receive a copy of my interview transcript:

Yes No

I would like to receive a copy of the brief summary of the research findings:

Yes

Signature:

.....

Date:

If you answered "Yes" to either of the two questions above, please provide your contact details:

Mailing address:

.....

Telephone:

Email:

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09/2013 Reference Number 2010/355

Appendix D: Personal Educational Planning: Expression of Interest



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau
INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Epsom Campus
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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

(Principal)

(Address)

Date

Dear (Principal's name)

My name is Sue Sutherland and I am a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education University of Auckland. I am currently undertaking a research project in fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy degree through the University of Auckland. Using a case study approach the aim of the project is to investigate the experiences and perceptions of those involved in personal educational planning at senior secondary school level. Personal educational planning is the process students use to organise and plan for their learning as it unfolds throughout their school career and into the future. Contributing factors in this PEP process can include subject choosing, goal setting, management of data as well as guidance from school advisors and teachers. A copy of the Information sheet for school principals is included with this letter. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in the research being conducted in your school.

A sample of secondary schools in the Auckland area has been invited to register interest. From these expressions of interest, one school will be selected based on data from the enclosed form. If your school is selected, you will be contacted by phone and a follow-up meeting arranged. A meeting will then be held with interested staff members who are involved with year 11-13 students to explain the study and invite participation from teachers, deans, career or academic advisors or counselors. If your school is not selected, you will be notified by mail.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you need further details I can be contacted on 6238899 ext. 48734 or at sue.sutherland@auckland.ac.nz.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sutherland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09/2013. Reference Number 2010/355

Appendix E: Request for School Data



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Te Kura Akorangi o Tamaki Makaurau

INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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REQUEST FOR SCHOOL DATA

Please complete this form if your school is interested in participating in this project

Name of school _____

Name of Principal _____

Contact details (phone and /or email) _____

Personal educational planning is the process students use to organise and plan for their learning as it unfolds throughout their school career and into the future. Contributing factors in this PEP process can include subject choosing, goal setting, management of data as well as guidance from school advisors and teachers along the way.

Does your school have a system for helping your students to navigate their learning, performance and achievement and generate plans for their future Personal Educational Planning? YES / NO

If YES how long has such a system been in place? Please describe the systems that you do have in place for supporting the personal educational planning of students.

Please identify who is involved in supporting students' personal educational planning.

Describe their roles in supporting the personal educational planning of your students. Also if you have any school documents which describe these support systems, please attach them to this form.

Please return the completed form to Sue Sutherland, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, private bag 92601, Symonds St, Auckland in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope by

Many thanks,

Yours sincerely

Sue Sutherland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09/2013.
Reference Number 2010/355**

Appendix F: Student Engagement Data Sheet



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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DATA SHEET

Form Teachers

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

Form Teacher _____

Date _____

Student Name _____ Form _____

Year _____

Please tick appropriate box

Criteria:	High	Average	Low
Believes he/she can achieve at the expected academic subject levels.			
Persists in academic studies when faced with challenges.			
Has clear goals for studies at school and beyond.			
Meets deadlines			
Able to drive own learning			
Attends classes regularly.			

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09/2013
 Reference Number 2010/355

Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
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Confidentiality Agreement RESEARCH ASSISTANT

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: What are the experiences and perceptions of those involved at senior secondary school level?

I, _____ (full name) agree to undertake to treat all research information contained in the interviews and related to the research project in confidence. I agree to abide by the following conditions:

- Ensure all research tapes/voice files are stored in a safe place and no other persons are able to access or remove them;
- Keep all recorded information confidential and not discuss the content of research interviews or field notes with any other person;
- Not make copies of any research tapes, voice files, field notes or transcripts;
- Return all interview tapes to the researcher
- Signed:

_____ Date _____

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 8/09/2010 for 3 years from 8/09/2010 to 8/09/2013.
Reference Number 2010/355**

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