# Evaluating a tertiary high school: Enabling students disengaged from school

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# Presentation Overview

- Tertiary High School
- Research Aim and Research Question
- Mixed methods
- Conceptual Framework:  Program Logic
- Study One – Students' Perspective
- Study Two – Adult Stakeholders' Perspective
- Study Three – Attendance, Progression, Stand-downs and Achievement
- Conclusion

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# Tertiary High School

- Established at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in February 2010 with 46 students in Year 11
- As a response to an increasing number of students at risk of dropping out of school in the Southern Region of Auckland City, New Zealand
- High density of Maori and Pasifika families attending low-decile (high poverty) schools.
- In collaboration with 14 other schools in the Southern Auckland region, New Zealand
- Targets students who have potential to succeed but are “at risk” of not completing their secondary education in the traditional schooling environment

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# Tertiary High School Goals:

- to integrate the final secondary education with the first years of post-secondary education and training at no cost for the student;
- for Year 11 students (15 years) to learn at their own pace – e.g. Study could be at a NCEA Level 1, 2, and 3 in Year 1;
- students to complete NCEA Level 2 and a Career and Technical Education qualification at diploma level by the end of four years;

OR:

- select a career pathway solely at MIT or another learning institution after their first year at the THS.

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# Tertiary High School Principles

- Collaboration
- Students
  - integrated and socialised into the tertiary institution
  - appropriate ongoing contact with their secondary school
  - personal program of personal growth and development
- Funding – dual enrolment
- Program
  - vocational and technical
  - All credit bearing
- Strong emphasis on pastoral clear, monitoring progress and supporting learning
- Tertiary High School used as a retreat space
- Minimal duplication of facilities or services between the THS and MIT

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# Research Aim
# Research Question, Method

*Aim*:

The aim of this research was to explore the ways in which New Zealand's first Tertiary High School has impacted on the students' lives within the first two years.

*Question*:

Did the development of the Tertiary High School lead to success for students identified by their secondary schools as likely to fail and/or disengage from education?

*Mixed Methods: Three Studies*

*Study One and Study Two: Qualitative*

*Study Three: Quantitative*

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# Conceptual Framework: Program Logic

- Uses a theory-driven evaluation process
- "Theory is generally defined as a set of interrelated assumptions, principles, and/or propositions to explain or guide social actions (Chen, 1990, p. 40)"

- "Program theory" is "a specification of **what must be done to achieve the desired goals**, what other important impacts may also be anticipated and how these goals and impacts would be generated (Chen, 1990, p. 43)."

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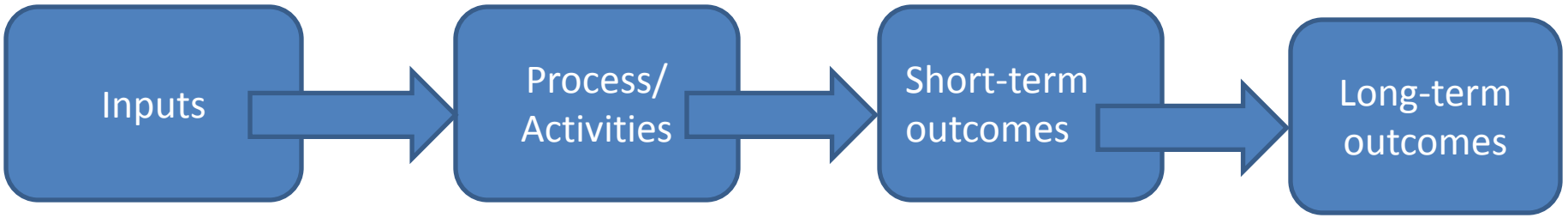
# Simplified Program Logic Model

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# Three Studies

- Study 1: Students' perspective
- Study 2: Adult stakeholders' perspective
- Study 3: Attendance, progression, achievement

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# Study 1: Students' Perspective

- Qualitative Method
- Narrative
- Program Logic Models
  - Traditional schooling
  - Tertiary High School

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# Aim

The aim of this study was to determine whether and why students attending the new Tertiary High School (THS) believed that it was a better option for them in comparison to their traditional schooling experience.

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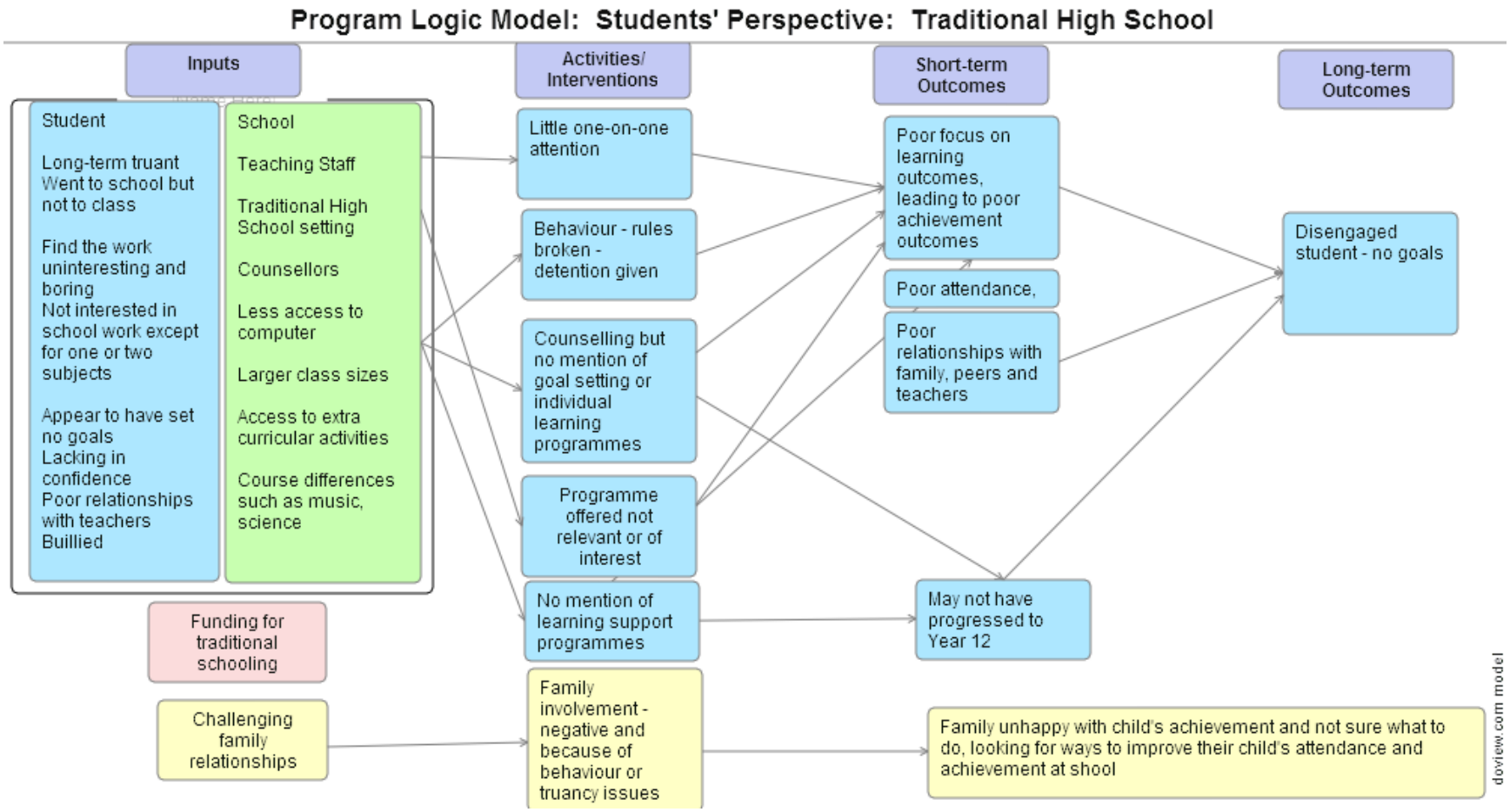
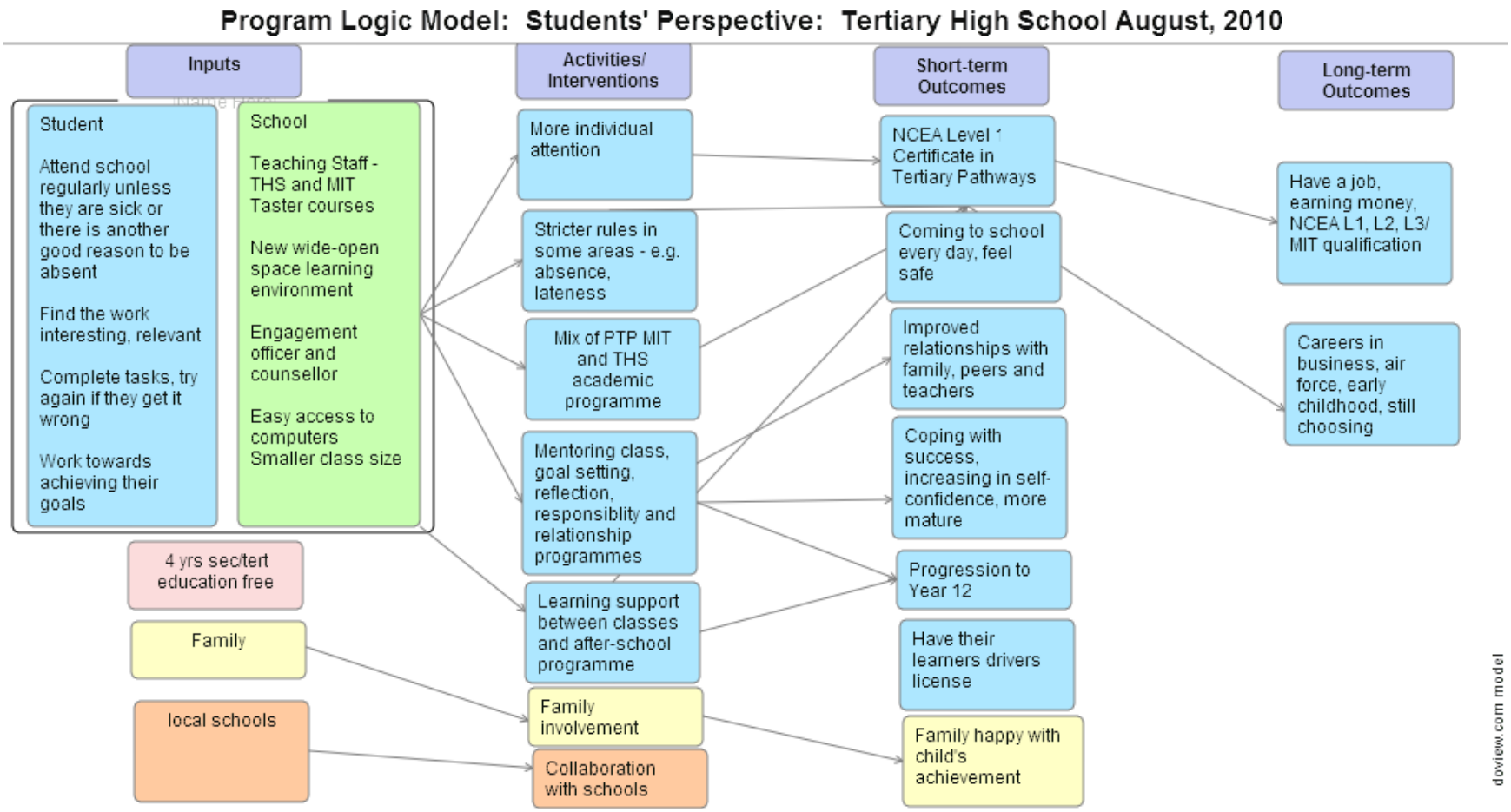
# Students Program Logic: Traditional Schooling



# Students Program Logic: THS Schooling



# Study 2: Adult Stakeholders' perspective

- Qualitative Research Design
- Program Logic Conceptual Framework
- Aim: To ascertain the "criteria for student success" at the THS by the adult stakeholders using program logic to create a theory-of-action at the Tertiary High School

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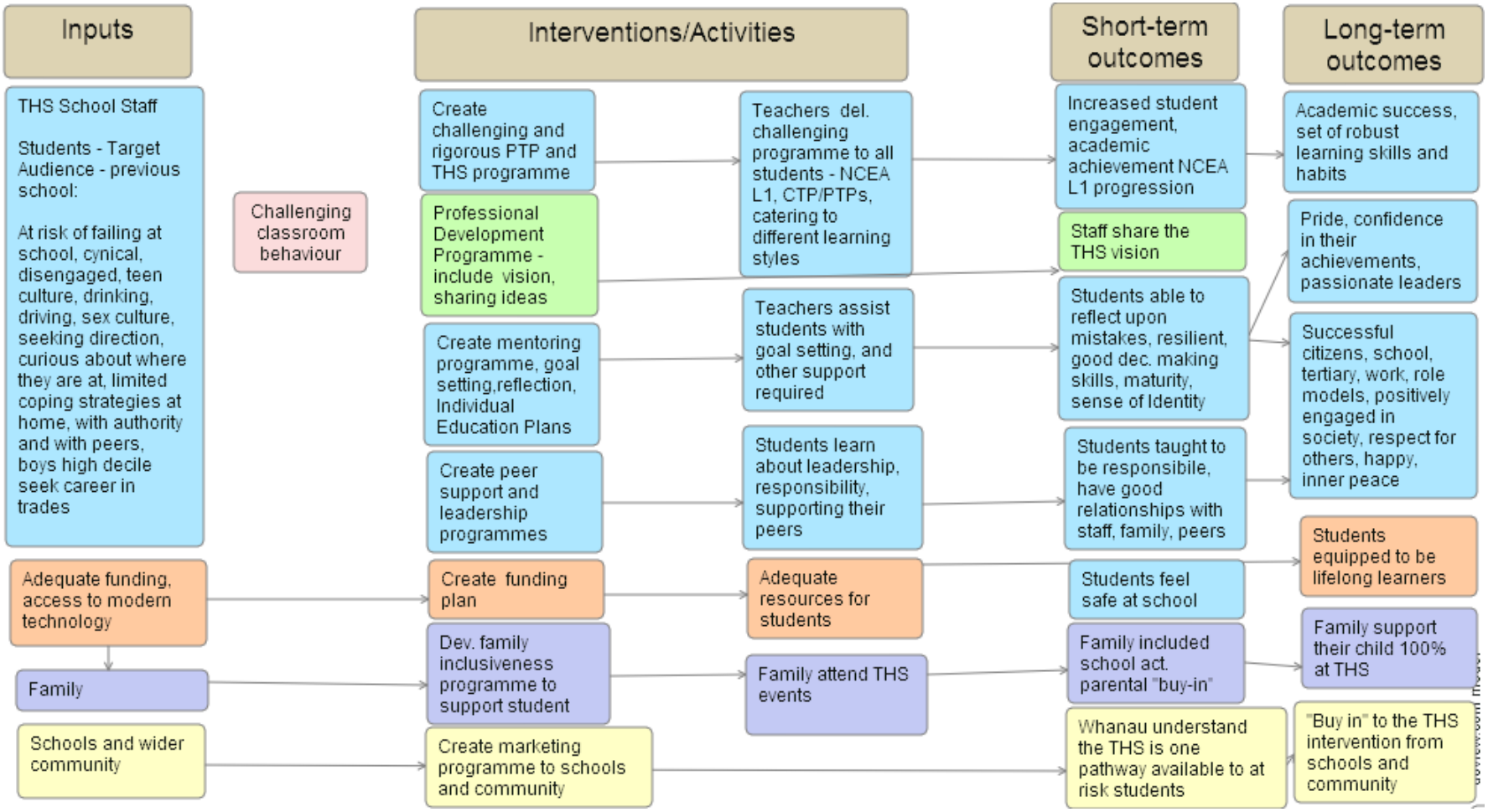
# Adult Stakeholders Program Logic Model – March 2011
# SCHOOL OF SECONDARY TERTIARY STUDIES - (SSTS)



# Study 3: Testing the Program Logic Models from Study One and Study Two

## Quantitative Research Design

- Aim: This study aimed to evaluate the claim that students attending the THS had higher levels of engagement (as demonstrated by school attendance) and higher levels of achievement as demonstrated by the NZQA achievement records and/or postsecondary MIT achievement records) than the students from the control schools.
- Data Collection: Age, gender, ethnicity, number of stand-downs, NZQA achievement transcripts 2010 and 2011

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# Themes

- Different from School
- Specific Goals
- They know me here as a learner – not as a problem
- Attendance
- Achievement

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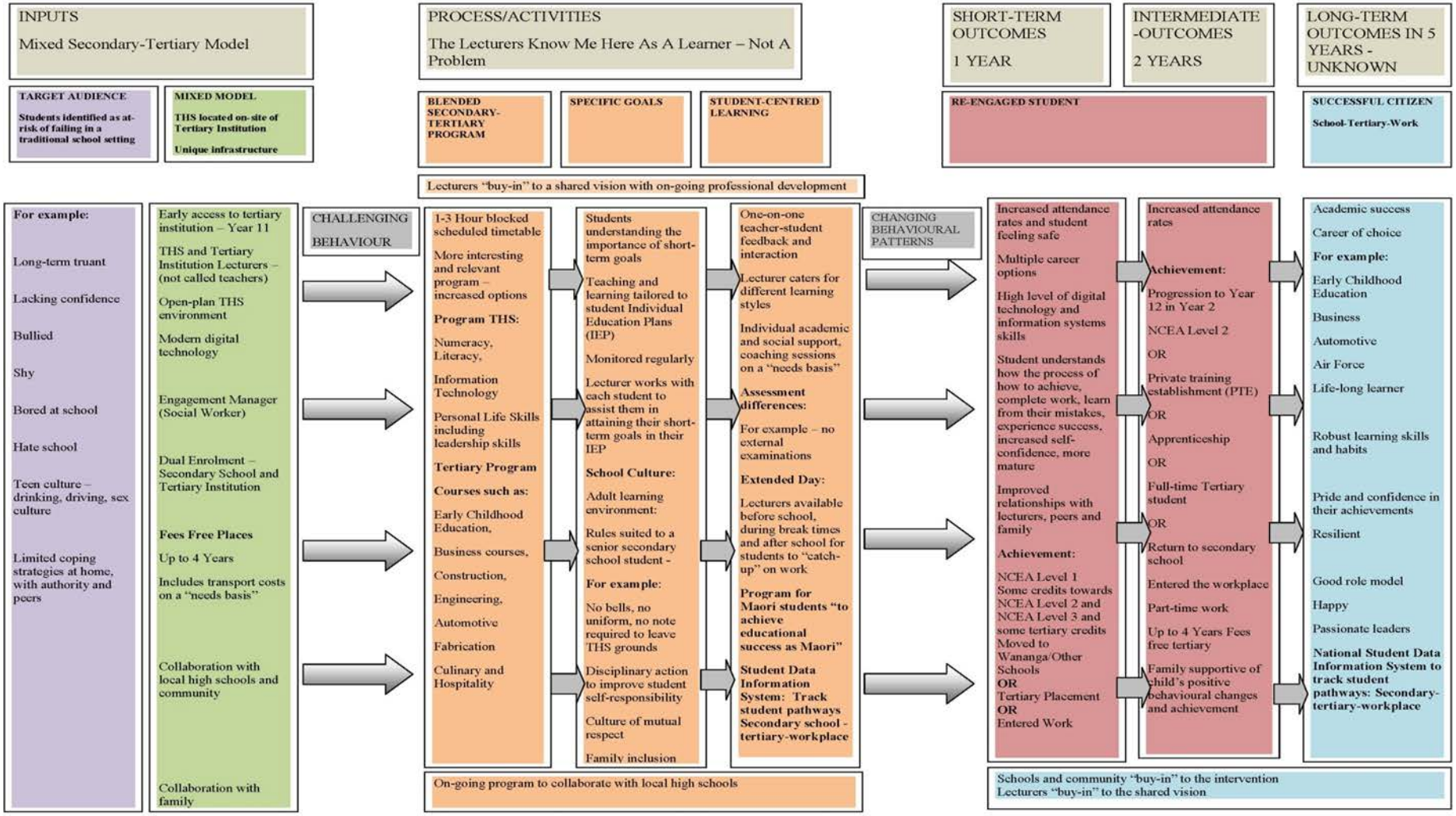
# Program Logic Model: The determinants if student success for at risk students



# Future Research Directions

- Longitudinal study - mixed methods
- A national and international comparative study on secondary-postsecondary interventions to test the program logic model presented in this study

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