Evaluating a tertiary high school: Enabling students disengaged from school

Dr Colleen Young
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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, Standdowns and Achievement
• Conclusion
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
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.
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
**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*
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).”
Simplified Program Logic Model

Inputs → Process/Activities → Short-term outcomes → Long-term outcomes
Three Studies

• Study 1: Students’ perspective

• Study 2: Adult stakeholders’ perspective

• Study 3: Attendance, progression, achievement
Study 1: Students’ Perspective

• Qualitative Method
• Narrative
• Program Logic Models
  – Traditional schooling
  – Tertiary High School
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.
Students Program Logic: Traditional Schooling

Program Logic Model: Students' Perspective: Traditional High School

**Inputs**
- Student
  - Long-term truant
  - Went to school but not to class
  - Find the work uninteresting and boring
  - Not interested in school work except for one or two subjects
  - Appeared to have set no goals
  - Lacking in confidence
  - Poor relationships with teachers
  - Bullied

- School
  - Teaching Staff
  - Traditional High School setting
  - Counsellors
  - Less access to computer
  - Larger class sizes
  - Access to extra-curricular activities
  - Course differences such as music, science

**Activities/Interventions**
- Little one-on-one attention
- Behaviour - rules broken - detention given
- Counselling but no mention of goal setting or individual learning programmes
- Programme offered not relevant or of interest
- No mention of learning support programmes
- Family involvement - negative and because of behaviour or truancy issues

**Short-term Outcomes**
- Poor focus on learning outcomes, leading to poor achievement outcomes
- Poor attendance,
- Poor relationships with family, peers and teachers
- May not have progressed to Year 12

**Long-term Outcomes**
- Disengaged student - no goals
- Family unhappy with child's achievement and not sure what to do, looking for ways to improve their child's attendance and achievement at school

**Funding for traditional schooling**

**Challenging family relationships**
Students Program Logic: THS Schooling

Program Logic Model: Students' Perspective: Tertiary High School August, 2010

Inputs:
- Student
  - Attend school regularly unless they are sick or there is another good reason to be absent
  - Find the work interesting, relevant
  - Complete tasks, try again if they get it wrong
  - Work towards achieving their goals
- School
  - Teaching Staff - THS and MIT Taster courses
  - New wide-open space learning environment
  - Engagement officer and counsellor
  - Easy access to computers Smaller class size

Activities/Interventions:
- More individual attention
- Stricter rules in some areas - e.g. absence, lateness

Short-term Outcomes:
- NCEA Level 1 Certificate in Tertiary Pathways
- Coming to school every day, feel safe
- Improved relationships with family, peers and teachers
- Coping with success, increasing in self-confidence, more mature
- Progression to Year 12
- Have their learners drivers license
- Family happy with child's achievement

Long-term Outcomes:
- Have a job, earning money, NCEA L1, L2, L3/ MIT qualification
- Careers in business, air force, early childhood, still choosing

Other:
- 4 yrs sectert education free
- Family
- local schools
- Collaboration with schools
- Family involvement
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
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
Themes

- Different from School
- Specific Goals
- They know me here as a learner – not as a problem
- Attendance
- Achievement
Program Logic Model: The determinants of student success for at-risk students

**Inputs**
- Mixed Secondary-Tertiary Model

**Target Audience**
- Students identified at risk of failing in a traditional school setting

**Process/Activities**
- The Lecturers Know Me Here As A Learner – Not A Problem

**Specific Goals**
- Student-Centred Learning

**Challenging Behaviour**
- Early access to tertiary institution – Year 11
- TTHS and Tertiary Institution Lecturers – (not called teachers)
- Open-plan TTHS environment
- Modern digital technology
- Engagement Manager (Social Worker)
- Dual Enrolment – Secondary School and Tertiary Institution
- Fees Free Places
- Up to 4 Years includes transport costs on a “needs basis”
- Collaboration with local high schools and community
- Collaboration with family

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- 1 Year
- Increased attendance rates and student feeling safe
- Multiple career options
- High level of digital technology and information systems skills
- Student understands how the process of how to achieve, complete work, learn from their mistakes, experience success, increased self-confidence, more mature
- Improved relationships with lecturers, peers and family
- Program for Maori students “to achieve educational success as Maori”
- Student Data Information System
- Track student pathways
- Secondary school-tertiary-workplace
- Return to secondary school
- Entered the workplace
- Part-time work
- Up to 4 Years Fees free tertiary
- Family supportive of child’s positive behavioural changes and achievement

**Intermediate Outcomes**
- 2 Years
- RE-ENGAGED STUDENT
- Apprentice
- OR
- Full-time Tertiary student
- OR
- Academic success
- Career of choice
- For example:
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Business
  - Automotive
  - Air Force
  - Life-long learner

**Long-Term Outcomes**
- 5 Years - Unknown
- Successful Citizen
- School - Tertiary - Work

**On-going program to collaborate with local high schools**
- Lecturers “buy-in” to the intervention
- Lecturers “buy-in” to the shared vision
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