MINOR FALL AND MAJOR LIFT: RAISING

EDUCATIONAL CAPACITY THROUGH

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

This transdisciplinary study explores holistic models of education and community development. It looks at transformations that occur when parents undertake tertiary education in two High Schools in a community with a high multi-cultural youth population. Engaging in interviews and focus groups, participants give narrative accounts providing rich qualitative data. Effective pedagogy is analysed in this Community Skills Certificate course on *Identity and Communication*. The research seeks practical solutions to barriers to social and educational progress in the students' lives. It ascertains improvement in interpersonal relationships, including parenting skills. In addition, it looks at changes in family attitudes toward education that facilitates increased career opportunities. This work suggests that building local capacity through educational partnerships and effective pedagogy empowers individuals and the community. Families and employees are able to function more effectively as they apply newly learned intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The study juxtaposes constructs of fall and lift – socially, educationally and psychologically. Belief in agency and transformational pedagogy is central to this study's argument that through the cracks of disadvantage holistic alternatives emerge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Partnerships and holistic pedagogy are empowering means of building capacity in the local community. Using narrative inquiry, I explore what happens when a High School and a tertiary institution collaborate to deliver Level Four tertiary education to parents. How can a Community Skills course on *Identity and Communication* help to address educational disadvantage in West Auckland?

The research questions underpinning this study are the following: will attending this tertiary course help parents become more pro-active in education for themselves, their children and other family members? What impact will it have on role models they present to their children concerning study? What effect will the teaching have on interpersonal relationships and communication at home? The overarching questions are two-fold: what happens when parents study? What are barriers to learning?

Initially, I am looking at the educational and social context of Massey, but aim to align the findings with broadly based educational and social theories and models. Practical classroom application is considered in relation to the issues that lie below the surface as I perceive them as a West Auckland teacher.

The motivation for this research comes from personal teaching experience. As part of the primary school's accountability process, teachers articulate individual barriers to learning and risk factors in the class. School data may be compared with national averages. It was therefore disquieting to be confronted with statistics detailing educational disadvantage in Waitakere/West Auckland. I have been interested in sociology since my first job in Social Services at the age of eighteen exposed me to a range of clients' experiences of homelessness, alcoholism, poverty and crime in the inner city of Auckland. The Ministry of Education looks closely at disadvantage in education especially as it impacts Māori and Tagata Pasifika who, according to statistics, continue to miss out on the full benefits of our system.

For example, a report by Waipareira Way Trust into education in West Auckland showed 86 percent of Māori school leavers lacked sufficient qualifications to access any form of tertiary study last year (Talagi, 2008). This will be discussed in more detail concerning the impact this creates as it moves from an educational issue to a social one where limited career opportunities and income potential continue to create disadvantage across generations. There is also psychological disadvantage with issues around self-esteem and identity linking to potential criminal activity. Equity in educational achievement is important for all New Zealand students and for the well-being of society. This study looks into some gaps and offers some findings from those positioned in society not as the dominant voices, but of those previously disengaged with formal education. Unfortunately, the dominant are positioned to provide solutions, but as these solutions emanate from their own paradigm, we can end up with more of the same.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The impetus for this study is a desire for equity; that is a New Zealand education system that works for all. It comes from personal convictions concerning life-long learning. Dropping out of High School for some is synonymous with life-time disengagement with formal learning. How do we make West Auckland a desired place to live and receive an education? What are barriers to formal learning and how can we overcome them to create equity of outcome? The question is political, educational, sociological, and ethical. While this thesis begins with examining educational deficit and its consequences, this study is primarily concerned with agency and building capacity. Although there is a problem, there is a solution.

Background to the Context of the Study

West Auckland educationally falls below its geographical neighbours. Data from *Education Counts* (2009) shows 2008 figures detailing the percentages of school leavers with NCEA Level 1 or above: Waitakere City (84.6%); North Shore City (92.6%); and Auckland City (89.9%). The following are percentages of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above: Waitakere City (67.3%); North Shore City (84%); and Auckland City (80.7%). This inequity of outcome in secondary school attainment is not recent. From 1994 to 2003 approximately 21% of Waitakere City students did not gain any formal qualifications. This compares with 17% nationwide (Family Services, 2006).

The staff of the Community Skills programme at Unitec gave me opportunity to research a pilot programme. The Principal of Massey High had suggested Unitec run a parenting programme at the High School to address behavioural issues. Associate Head the School of Community Development, Geoff Bridgman, thought it would be more beneficial to introduce a course empowering parents in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as a positive approach to parenting, without suggesting deficit management in the home. In addition, it would be strongly linked to community networks, such as the High School, local tertiary institution, and to community-based careers. He explained his idea:

What would happen if we introduced a course that would assist with parenting issues but was part of a broader tertiary education programme that would help adults to overcome a range of barriers to progress in their lives, including barriers to education; facilitate the impact of parents as role models in entering and achieving tertiary qualifications at Level Four; get access to other tertiary qualifications including degrees; and acquire a range of capabilities that would make them more effective in most employment situations and in whānau relationships? (May, 27, 2008, oral communication.)

A few years ago, the Board of Trustees at my school sponsored a Parenting with Confidence workshop and the hall was full – indicating that effective parenting was a community-wide interest. As a teacher of Years Zero to Two, I found strong parental partnership in education is vital in providing children with a good foundation in literacy. The research idea fitted personal interests in looking at engagement in education, and psychological models in the context of educational practice.

The 60-credit Community Skills programme was launched in July 2008 at Massey High School with the first one semester course being the 15-credit *Identity and Communication* course. Other courses in the Certificate are: *Abuse and Trauma Studies*; *Culture and Community*; *Youth Studies*; *Disability Studies*; and *Introduction to Counselling*. This initial course was free and equivalent to 25% of full-time study. Consequently, it keeps relationships in the home open, rather than excluding family members through an absorption in study. This first course became a prototype of a similar launch in a second local High School. Over three semesters, three groups of parents attended the course on *Identity and Communication*, from which this narrative inquiry derives. The result of the findings may be relevant to other geographical areas with a similar social context of high youth population, low high school achievement rate, and mixed ethnicity demographics.

The next stage involved interviewing the Deputy Principal at Massey High School to find out background information on the High School and Unitec partnership. He communicated his concerns about engaging high school students in the transition to tertiary education.

We were looking at the transition of our kids from secondary to tertiary. That was about five or six years ago. It became clear to us they were not going on. So what we wanted was a tertiary presence in the school. They won't get the quality qualifications by themselves…. Within the next ten years or so if you don't have a degree you won't be employed anywhere. There have certainly been job losses in Waitakere of unskilled people, and there will be a huge requirement for skilled people. Many adults in our community now are 20 or 21 and will have no real way for providing for their families without skills or education. They will be 40 year olds, losing jobs. No one will want them, so it's really critical we start to provide opportunity for the adults to retrain - or to train in tertiary terms rather than high school terms. (August, 12, 2009, oral communication.)

The Massey High School community numbers 2,347 (Educational Review Report: Massey High School, 2006). The ethnic composition is 43% European, 20% Māori, 14% Pacific Island and 23% Asian (Massey High School home page, 2008). The Massey geographical ward comprises of 15 primary schools, and a young population with the median age of 31 years and 26% aged 14 years and under. The population of the ward is 49,413 (Waitakere City Council, 2008). The Massey ward is broadly representative of Waitakere/West Auckland (see figures 1 and 2), which is multicultural and expanding by about 20% per decade (Waitakere City Council, 2008).

Massey High is a decile five school in West Auckland. About four years ago, it was numbered among twelve schools pioneering Waikato University's Te Kotahitanga - a research and development project. The goal was to lift Māori NCEA achievement levels (Educational Gazette, 2009). This programme had its genesis in Bishop and Berryman's (2006) narrative study about issues impacting Māori in education. This narrative study has been important in this research about barriers to learning, family/whānau interpersonal relationships, and community partnerships.

Massey High School's ethnic range reflects the multicultural population of New Zealand. It represents a part of New Zealand which, by its demographics, is of interest to researchers. For example, a researcher at the University of Auckland is studying the school's statistical data to monitor achievement progress (Auckland University, 2009). As a decile five school, with a

diverse ethnic base, Massey High reflects a broad base of New Zealand children. It is therefore possible to relate research findings here across much of the nation.

Figure 1.

Ethnicity

Compared with the city as a whole, the Massey Ward has a higher percentage of residents of Maori, Pacific Peoples and Other ethnic groups.

Note that, as for all wards, a large proportion of the "Other" ethnic group category is comprised of "New Zealander" responses.
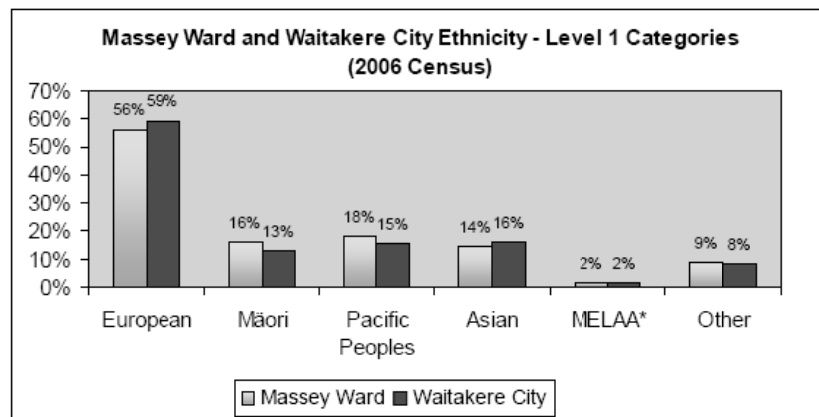
Note: Percentage totals may add to greater than 100 per cent due to individuals identifying with more than one group.
*MELAA = Middle Eastern, Latin American and African

Figure 2. Age profile – Waitakere City (left) and Massey Ward (right) (2006 Census).

Massey Ward, on average, has the youngest population of all the wards, with the highest percentage of residents aged 14 years and under (26%) and the lowest percentage of those 65 years and over (7%). The median age is 31 years, two years lower than the city average of 33 years.
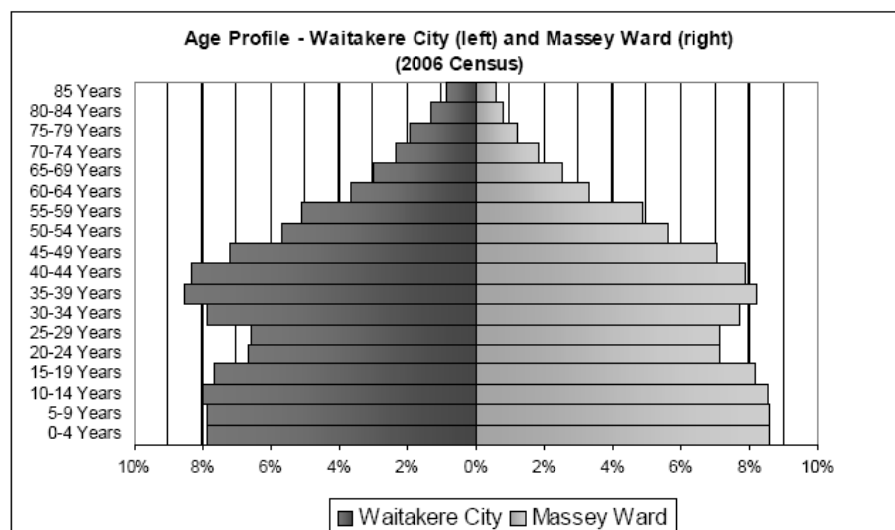
Waitakere City Council (2008, p. m-4) and Waitakere City Council (2008, p.m-3).

Background to the Approach of the Study

Next I considered a transdisciplinary perspective of bridging academic disciplines. I drew on learning in Social Practice and Education - as well as English for this narrative inquiry. Focus groups and interviews were used to gather stories from a select group of mature students, who are parents, most of whom live in West Auckland. Stories can capture the experiences of participants who have important reflective insight. Their understanding may help with strategies for closing educational gaps, overcoming barriers to learning, and presenting educational content that creates change. In this narrative inquiry I am a narrator. The topic is a complex one. There are multiple layers of text which may obscure the underlying story. By writing in the first person voice, I am present in this research as a guide to explain this journey. I have written about other people, but realise this story also contains a personal perspective.

Holistic education is a major thrust in this study. Transdisciplinarity permits disciplines such as history, sociology, English and education to overlap. This subject integration resembles the holistic approach to learning involved in indigenous knowledge and culture (Wheeler, n.d). I am interested in biculturalism, having enrolled in several Te Reo (Māori language) courses, Treaty of Waitangi workshops, attending bicultural hui at marae, and teaching tikanga (customs) in the classroom. The Treaty of Waitangi articulates cultural partnership as foundational to New Zealand society; this perspective is reinforced in the national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). This is a focus in the research.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Key Terms

The following terms are important to this study about raising educational capacity through community partnerships. The word "pedagogy" is the use of professional teaching skills to create an effective learning dynamic (Ministry of Education, 2007). This includes being sensitive to individual need, knowing what to teach, and using the best method. It involves understanding good professional practice. "Community development" denotes establishing structures and processes that are organic to local needs (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006). "Capacity building" concerns activities that reinforce the ability of the community to maintain effective growth and momentum (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh and Vidal, 2001/2007).

The research process involved collecting "narrative" data – stories which are recounted concerning personal experience (Smith and Watson, 2001). The term "agency" refers to the participants' ability to act autonomously to transform circumstances despite structural limitations (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 2006).

Background Literature to the Psychological Context

The start of the review involved looking at literature about barriers to learning. Sun (2006) has identified the following five domains as barriers to learning: the intrapersonal, relational, cultural, structural, and societal (p.52). Intrapersonal issues include: being ready to learn new ideas, having cognitive flexibility in processing information, and possessing sufficient self-esteem to manage anxiety and fears. Interpersonal issues include difficulties around communicating: divisiveness, misunderstandings and lack of sharing within the group. This indicates that to create agency, students need positive interpersonal and intrapersonal support and structure. In addition, Galusha (2008) speaks of loss of motivation and lack of interpersonal connections as a barrier to adult distance learning in education.

Gardner (1993) suggests there are seven different intelligences providing alternative ways for learners to reach human potential. He refers to a dual interest: to improve one's own well-being (self-awareness), and to relate effectively in a community context (social awareness). This

duality is reflected in the topic of identity (self-awareness) and communication (social awareness). Gardner's work has been applied in New Zealand schools to inform Gifted and Talented programmes (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Glasser's (1992) choice theory suggests barriers to learning are addressed when quality education meets basic needs. Quality education includes the following: a sense of belonging, enjoyment, freedom to make increased choices, and greater empowerment. He argues that when quality education is offered, schools thrive. In addition, students thrive. As basic needs are met, little coercion required because motivation becomes intrinsic. This model is used in some New Zealand schools and classrooms (including my own) and promotes values-based choices (Keown, Parker, and Tiakiwai, 2005).

Maslow

Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs is a progression from basic life requirements, to safety, belonging, love, self-esteem and self-actualisation. His discussion of human potential is applicable to a study on identity, and informs part of the theory of the *Identity and Communication* course. Maslow's concept of self-actualisation seemed nebulous until he alluded to C.S. Lewis's (1956) autobiographical work*, Surprised by Joy* which helped connect the concept with a person. Applied to Lewis, this term describes his capacity as a writer (62 of his books have now been published - Wilson, 1990); his development of reflective talents; his academic vocation as a Professor in English and Philosophy at Oxford and Cambridge Universities; and the synergy of his writing group of which Tolkien was a long-standing member. Maslow describes self-actualisation as "being in the groove" (p.106). Lewis was "in the groove" as a popular writer according to A.N. Wilson (1990), a biographer of Lewis.

> Nothing much would appear to have happened in the life of C.S. Lewis, who for his entire adult life was a scholar and teacher at Oxford and Cambridge in England…. And yet books about him continue to pour from the presses on both sides of the Atlantic. This phenomenon can only be explained by the fact that his writings, while being self-consciously and deliberately at variance with the twentieth century, are paradoxically in tune with the needs and concerns of our times. (ix)

A healthy culture, according to Maslow, is one which produces individuals with a strong identity and function in the community and nation. If the *Identity and Communication* course was a mini "peak experience" for the students in their realisation of identity, there should be corresponding involvement in the community. The *Identity and Communication* course's context is Community Skills – there is expectation students will use their growth in healthy self-knowledge to positively impact their community. Maslow's idea of self-actualisation is echoed in the educational rhetoric of Peter Fraser (1939):

> Every person, whatever his [sic.] level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind to which he is best fitted, and to the full extent of his powers. (Coxon, Massey and Marshall, 1994, p.29)

Seventy years later the "full extent" is not reaching rich and poor alike in providing equal educational advantage. However, Maslow (1968) observes that successful therapy helps to double a patient's score in The Willoughby Maturity scale, but inquires:

> Who shall then lift him to the seventy-fifth percentile? Or the one hundredth? And are we not likely to need new principles and techniques to do this with? (p.38)

Maslow's idea of "lift" is used in this study to discuss marginalisation and agency.

The research and theory above indicate barriers to learning are primarily in the intrapersonal and interpersonal domain. If psychological needs are met, attainment gaps may be bridged, enabling learners to fulfil their potential as contributing members of the community. Psychological "lift" denotes movement into a fully functioning state of being. Exceptional talent may emerge from "being in the groove". However, this research is also socially contextualised so the next consideration was the social sphere.

Background Literature to the Social Context

Literature supports the Deputy Principal's concern about employment for those lacking qualifications.

A highly skilled work force is critical to an innovative economy. Young people leaving school without qualifications may therefore face limited opportunities later in life. (Family Services, 2006)

There has been a neo-liberal emphasis on developing skills and competencies for the marketplace through the Tomorrow's Schools policy. However, this policy has not created equity of outcome - as West Auckland statistics indicate - despite the emphasis across curricula on gaining competencies (Ministry of Education, 2007). Schools are one of the major social institutions in modern life (McLennan, Ryan and Spoonley, 2004). This dominant social position makes them vulnerable to policies concerning free market ideals (Gray, 1998b, in McLennan, Ryan and Spoonley). This includes notions of globalisation as schools reach beyond national borders for new recruits to bolster dwindling funds. Education is the fifth largest export industry in Aotearoa/ New Zealand (McCutcheon, 2009), with the nation engaging in international trade in educational services. Globalisation has a marked effect on public policy (Cheyne, O'Brien and Belgrave, 2005). As Codd (2008) points out, these policies necessitate increased managerial accountability. Long-range values and vision is required to extend beyond "narrow reductionist images of the knowledge economy" (p.22). Part of this vision requires, as Hokowhitu (2004/2008) suggests, an education system that shows a genuine valuing of Māori culture to help hold things in balance.

As a transdisciplinary study, this work is positioned at the juncture of education and social practice to explore new approaches and outcomes. West Auckland, in reproducing its social and cultural capital, is perpetuating its disadvantage of educational outcomes and social inequality (Bell and Carpenter, 1994). Lauder and Hughes (1990) argue there is a myth of equity in the New Zealand education system, and Bourdieu (1974) suggests that treating all equally often results in inequity (in McLennan, Ryan and Spoonley, 2004). How these mature students in this study seek through strength of identity (Erikson, 1977) to gain the social rewards of education is a major thrust of this analysis. Social networks and family models are important influences in contesting the concept of social order and hegemony. Gramsci defines hegemony as the interplay of domination and leadership, where certain policies and practices are considered to be the general consensus but in reality allow one social group's interests to govern (Gramsci, 1971). However, as McNay (2000) points out, agency allows for change in power relations.

Social reproduction perpetuates cycles of advantage or disadvantage across generations. Research from Otago University confirms this. Heath, Stoddart and Green (2002) surveyed 2391 Otago medical students from 1987 to 2000 about their parents' occupations, socioeconomic status and education. Of those who responded (98.4%), nearly two-thirds (63.2%) had at least one university-educated parent. Our future doctors largely derive from the same privileged sphere in our society.

In addition, a longitudinal survey of Australian youth by Adrians, Green and Mangan (2002) explored the correlation between neighbourhoods and youth education. They studied 2,745 eighteen year olds and 3,089 twenty-one year olds. Their study shows a lack of adult income and vocational training in a neighbourhood creates a bias toward youth unemployment beyond individual or family explanations for the eighteen year olds. This study confirms Heath's (1999) and Overman's (2000) findings about neighbourhood effects (cited in Adrians, Green and Mangan). In addition, Jensen and Seltzer (2000, cited in Adrians et al.) surveyed ten schools in Melbourne and came to the same conclusion as Adrians et al. (2002) - there is a negative correlation between communities with low educational qualification and income, and high youth unemployment. If peers do further training beyond high school, it increases the chance of the individual in the community doing the same by 14 per cent. Poorly qualified neighbours perpetuate a cycle of underachievement in the community. This research indicates why West Auckland statistics may be stuck in a negative groove. There is a need for a strong social lift directed at the adult population as role models in the community to break this cycle. Efforts directed in the classroom without changing the community itself will not alter an educational groove of underachievement.

The impact of educational underachievement in the community has social implications. Box (1987) found a sense of personal failure and rejection can be factors in criminal behaviour, while Chapman et al. (2002) found involvement in education increases anticipation of a job and lessens the likelihood of criminal involvement (in White and Habibis, 2005). In addition, Wundersitz's (1996) study shows those disadvantaged and marginalised in society are more likely to continue in crime beyond juvenile offences (in White and Habibis). Box's study shows the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal factors in reducing crime; Chapman et al.'s

study confirms why a focus on jobs for future West Auckland residents is important. Creating a psychologically healthy and career-focused community is preventative for crime.

To break the cycle of social reproduction, Latham (1998) proposes creating a culture of educational achievement in schools (in Adrians, Green and Mangan, 2002). This prevents intergenerational unemployment (Jensen and Seltzer 2000, cited in Adrians, Green and Mangan). The same longitudinal survey suggests encouraging positive role models in the community. Lifting the groove from a negative to a positive place is effected through the home and, beyond that, through positive role models in the neighbourhood.

To establish positive long-term results in the community, Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy's (2007) model of sustainability directs emphasis beyond the classroom and school to the wider system where national responsibility is assumed for educational outcomes. According to Bishop et al., this includes sufficient funding and resources, a national policy that addresses inequities in educational achievement, as well as leadership modelling and support. National funding and resources is important for helping lift the qualifications of West Auckland parents as community role models.

The Ministry of Education (1997) states tertiary education is of major importance in resourcing New Zealanders to embrace ongoing challenges (cited in Peters and Roberts, 1999). It provides new impetus for change - both at an individual and vocational level. In addition, it provides cultural and lifestyle enrichment, as well as preparing leaders and workers for global economic participation through acquiring industry and business knowledge, expertise and enterprise (cited in Peters and Roberts, 1999). The advantage of increasing educational capacity in West Auckland positively impacts the nation through a vibrant multicultural youth population in a positive groove of fulfilling its potential. The English Dearing Report (1997) likewise suggests that tertiary education improves the social, economic and cultural well-being of the nation (in Peters and Roberts, 1999). It results in the intellectual growth of individuals, the cultivation of work skills, contributes to global expert knowledge, and promotes culture and values. In addition, it creates competitive advantage internationally and a foundation for economic and social transformation through innovation and lifelong learning (in Peters and Roberts, 1999). This is being "in the groove" on a social level.

Background Literature to the Philosophical Context

The psychological discussion of "full potential" was overlaid onto a sociological one of "neighbourhoods". The "lift" factor seems to occur as the culture of the community changes through adult education. Interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal (psychological) support helps to raise adult role models' capabilities. The next area to explore was the philosophical context.

Foucault

This is not a Pipe is a short book by Foucault (1983) where he deconstructs meaning in the art works of René Magritte by way of journeys through multiple meanings. He questions the structure or frame around a painting, starting with the art work's title and what it means. He questions credentials and authority in issuing statements. He queries emphasis within a sentence and shows how emphasis can change meaning. He questions the stability of both the abstract and concrete structure of all things including the structure we place around our interpretations, and meanings we bring to the work. He challenges pedagogic space and posited "facts". Could a teacher go beyond the surface to realise alternate "realities?" Could they allow a moment of doubt to be expressed in a "confused and choked" voice (p.30) in order to find other meanings? Foucault's poststructuralist perspective suggests pedagogical structure itself is unstable and can be interpreted in diverse ways depending on what emphasis is placed on things. There are no pedagogical certainties in education. The teacher needs to keep questioning multiple meanings. Foucault questions the teacher's role, the subjects of study and the structures on which realities are posited. Anyone can make statements, including children. "Knowledge" is an issue of power concerning whose voice is heard and validated. Much in education rests on structures that can be easily erased. The script is never permanent. From a philosophical perspective, Foucault challenges educators to find alternative ways of interpreting possibilities.

Not only is the pedagogic space, content and authority questioned, but Foucault also comments on the ultimate loss of identity deriving from "similitude." Murmuring "Campbell, Campbell, Campbell, Campbell", Foucault refers to artist Andy Warhol's Pop Art reproduction of multiple cans of Campbell soup (Foucault, 1983, p.54). The original loses its meaning in the excessive duplication of a product or a concept.

A day will come when, by means of similitude relayed indefinitely along the length of a series, the image itself, along with the name it bears, will lose its identity. (Foucault, 1983, p.54)

Foucault (1981) sees discourse as fluid as writing on a blackboard and like writing on the blackboard it is not permanent but is instead discontinuous and unstable. The dominant discourse is not one but multiple and it is in the gaps and disparities between these discourses that emerge unexplored areas of silence, resistance and alternative voices – the marginalised discourses. Foucault has said that his writing contains not theories but bombs (Gutting, 1994, in Marshall, 2008). It is a metaphor with connotations of demolishing old decaying structures no longer needed to create new edifices that meet contemporary needs. Yet Foucault reminds us technology can obscure the fact we have long forgotten what the original can of Campbell soup looks and tastes like in efforts to reproduce more of the same.

The challenge for education in the context of globalisation, therefore, is to allow indigenous or local identity to emerge so we are not merely reciting choked and confused ideas nor inanely mass-producing classroom similitude. Teaching that reflects the local community within a pedagogical space occurs as the teacher allows, through deep questioning, truths to emerge that resonate with the group. There is a process of deconstructing the text on which practice derives. The challenge in an era of global competition is how to retain our distinct identity and our distinct pedagogy. If the structure topples over, we may be motivated to find stronger structures educationally and socially. We may find a more appropriate script.

This theory invites questions about education. Historically, our education system has been structured on an English model. Is this the best system in the context of a bicultural nation? Is there bicultural pedagogy uniquely suited to our identity as a nation? If so, this should inform the script taught in schools. Is the classroom a Campbell soup factory reproducing a model, or is it a place where human beings explore their unique identities, skills and talents that enable them to be fully in the groove as adults? The challenge is to find text and structure that is "true" to New Zealand education. If our educational structure and system is wobbly, what will work? Foucault's literature challenges educators to ask questions, and to test educational structure to see if it is stable, or if in fact it is in danger of toppling over. West Auckland educational

statistics suggest the issue is in fact structural. We need to consider the premise or foundation on which New Zealand educational pedagogy rests.

Derrida was next in the literature search. If the issue is a structural one, then what is appropriate to the community? I encountered binaries: in the groove, out of the groove; disadvantage and advantage. Foucault gave an image of educational factories producing Campbell soup cans. In sharp contrast, Maslow gave an image of an author penning the Narnia series or *Allegory of love*. There is a tension between the poststructuralist and humanistic perspective. Maslow's is a humanistic perspective with a belief in the authentic self. In contrast, the poststructuralist perspective suggests constructed selves or subjects.

Derrida

Derrida (1978) invites deep delving to find out what is signified by our language. For example, what do words such as *disadvantage* signify to those who finish schooling at sixteen? It is not just the words themselves, but the gap in between the concepts. For example, Derrida suggests there is potency in the differences between the "major" and "minor." In music, this difference can be small with just a half-tone between a major or minor note in the scale although the tonal quality may yield a very dissimilar effect including discordance. In social systems, the "major" position of social dominance can create advantage that continues to reproduce benefits across generations. This difference has sociological significance. It is not the polarity of the social position itself, but the gap between that can be explored. Differences can create what Derrida refers to as a "play of its elements within the total form" (p.279) which implies even silent or minor members of a group add their own dynamics to the totality of the interaction. Minority social groups make their own contribution to the fabric of society, and create their own dynamics in their interaction with other marginalised sectors of society. Derrida suggests that negativity itself can be a resource (p.259). This indicates that the space of difference, negativity, deficit, and disadvantage can become a place where alternative pathways emerge. For example, even minor writing may, according to Derrida, produce a "major illumination" (p. 276).

Freire

Freire (1998) was the next theorist that provided ideas about social change. He suggests transformation arises out of the teacher's and students' ongoing work of constructing and

reconstructing knowledge together. Through interaction, an identity is assumed and capacity is developed. Questions are asked, and partnerships are created. Freedom comes from reflection and action that result in change (Freire, 2007). Questions do not have to presuppose teacher-directed correct answers and therefore pedagogical-based research can become a journey of learning from student knowledge. It is when a teacher realises they are a student that real teaching and learning takes place. This is the dual aspect of education: analysing existing pedagogical practice, while also seeking new and better ways of learning and teaching. It allows for difference to emerge out of dialogue, as well as "conscientisation," that is, a deepened awareness of the social context (Roberts, 2008). Giroux said that Freire brought together education and social practice in his work in adult literacy among the poor in Brazil (Bell, Gaventa and Peters, in Horton and Freire, 1990). Horton, in quoting Lao Tau of 604 BC, indicated this involves going to the people and learning from them.

The subordinate can lead the way forward to a new truth or a new way of acting. Foucault creates the challenge to critically examine structures - for they may not be as they seem. Derrida suggests the place of difference is where alternatives arise. Transformational pedagogy involves learning from those for whom the system failed. The social margins have a dynamic resourcefulness, according to Derrida. There are factors creating "lift" from one groove to another. Interested in holism in the transdisciplinary context of education and social practice, I consider a Māori perspective next.

CHAPTER FOUR

ADDITIONAL LITERATURE

Values

Pere (1994) authored *Ako: concepts and learning in the Māori tradition* to define indigenous values for teachers, such as the concept of manāki depicting care, warmth, esteem, kindness, and hospitality. A key theme in Pere's work is the centrality of tamariki (children) and aroha (love). This includes the values of compassion, mana (integrity), tikanga and the knowledge of Te Reo. Pere considers the life principle of the language, the land, and the culture in relation to Māori as a people. The Māori language contains the ethos of the people, and the land sustains and nourishes the community. The word awhina denotes practising care toward people through helping, showing friendship and giving to others. It is among the values emphasised in Pere's work. Pere's twenty-four years of teaching experience ranges from preschool to tertiary (Barnados, 2009), and the tikanga encapsulated in her book continues to influence education today, such as *Te Ao Kori,* a curricula resource currently being developed by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, *Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) – The Online Learning Centre* – 2009).

Others influencing an understanding of Māori values in the teaching profession include Graham and Linda Smith (1986; 1990; 1991) and their work concerning Kaupapa Māori (Māori ideology) and Kura Kaupapa (Māori schools) practice (in Jenkins and Ka'ai, 1994). McMurchy-Pilkington and Trinick (2008) discuss educational policies in the context of Māori agency and marginalisation, and the socio-political arena. This includes Māori textual inclusion in the curriculum. Acknowledging the role of non-Māori educators in promoting bicultural values, the writers suggest that teachers "…ensure that Māori epistemology is evident in all curricula…" (p.142).

There are distinct cultural values implicit in our culture. One is shown in the following quote by the Principal of Massey High. "Jim Bolger once said there are three things that will drive this nation forward. They are "education, education, education…." We must make education our number one priority to drive our nation forward" (Ritchie, 2009). However, education is not an abstract value for Māori. A proverb captures a different emphasis:

Ki mai ki ahau, he aha te mea nui it te ao? Maku e ki atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata! (Ask me what is the greatest thing in the world? And I should answer it is people, it is people, it is people!) (in Pere, 1994, p68)

Bolger repeats the word "education" three times to make his point. The Māori proverb cited above likewise uses threefold repetition, but stresses the importance of tāngata (people) as a primary value. With a focus on people, education can cross cultural and social divides, empowering in a holistic way.

Bishop and Berryman's (2006) study discusses Māori values related to schooling. Mana denotes charisma, uniqueness, authority, power, autonomy, status, dignity, giftedness and integrity (Ryan, 1995; Pere, 1994). Bishop and Berryman (2006) give a poignant story of a Māori boy, passionate about maths at Primary School. Then one day he came home, hating this subject. From that day, his behaviour steadily deteriorated. The cause was never determined, but his parents suspect his mana had been trampled on by a teacher.

Whakamā suggests embarrassment, shyness and loss of mana (Ryan, 1995). Translated to the classroom context, reasons for this include: work that is too hard, a pace too rapid and inadequate help that results in failure (Bishop and Berryman, 2006). The pupil is "too whakamā" to tell their parents or to approach the teachers. They are embarrassed because "they don't want to be seen as dumb" (Bishop and Berryman, p. 158).

Pere (1994) refers to whānaungatanga as "practices that bond and strengthen the kinship ties of whānau" (p.26). This includes supporting the team or unit. Collective work is important in many cultures. Māori students in Bishop and Berryman's study (2006) like to work in groups in a cooperative environment. Their ideal teacher, as a team leader, shows aroha and concern for the students, fosters good communication skills and shows genuineness. They respect children's mana, and acknowledge their spirituality.

We're wairua people, spiritual people. Yes, everything begins and ends with God. We start with karakia [prayer], and we finish with karakia, and actually it's holistic. We want to think of the spiritual, the physical, the mental and the psychological intellectual. That's what we want to address in our tamariki, our mokopuna [children, grandchildren] – the holistic perspective. (Bishop and Berryman, 2006, p.163)

A capacity to care and to help the child succeed is important. "Teachers who have got that lovely wairua [spirit]. You know you can tell that they care about you, they care about people, they care about who they are…prepared to do whatever it is that helps our kids to succeed" (Bishop and Berryman, p.165).

This literature search led to the question: if Māori are positioned in the gaps in our society and their words denote values and a way of life different from Pākeha (European), how can we put Māori pedagogy into this gap to provide the "lift" from disadvantage to advantage? What is foundational to all in the New Zealand system? What text will enable our unique identities to emerge? What pedagogy will lift the subordinate in society into a place of healthy self-actualisation? If colonial pedagogy has not worked, what will? Some background information on *Te Whāriki* enabled me to position it as text pertinent to Māori.

Te Whāriki

Te Whāriki was written as a bicultural document model with recognition of the importance of empowering Māori through education (May, 2001). The title *Te Whāriki* was devised by Tamati Reedy, with the metaphor of a woven mat, with strands, patterns, and a place "for all to stand on" (May, p.245). The document is influenced by theorists such as Bronfenbrenner (Ministry of Education, 1996), as well as Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, and Bruner (May, 2001). Tilly Reedy, one of the contributors, based the document on the concept of self-determination, with the rights of all New Zealanders being acknowledged (Reedy, 1993; Reedy, 1995 both cited in May, 2002). Interestingly, *Te Whāriki* was well-received in academic circles, and received international acclaim for its emphasis on rights of children and a child-centred approach to learning. A Norwegian curriculum developer described the title and "profile" of a "minority culture" as an important example of providing indigenous voice. Britain used this model as representing "what we want for our children in early childhood" (May, p.247).

Te Whāriki illustrates the weaving together of Māori and Pākeha pedagogies used in Early Childhood Centres across a wide range of philosophical beliefs and practices. Grounded in educational theory, it is community and family oriented. It is based on practice that empowers educators and children alike. It reflects New Zealand's unique bicultural heritage and identity without hinting of a Campbell soup factory. *Te Whāriki* has pioneered the way in education by

pointing to alternative ways to do things, rooted in the deep structure of our national differences and uniqueness.

Figure 3 (below) from *Te Whāriki* shows how the weaving of the strands and the principles together represents a unified mat or foundation for learning. The principles are underlying beliefs concerning priorities in education that inform curricula decisions, such as the importance of involving family and community in education (Ministry of Education, 2007). The strands are areas in which learning and development - such as personal well-being - become interlaced with the principles to become like a plaited mat made of natural fibre, strong and durable. Like a mat upon which further things are placed, educationally *Te Whāriki* provides a foundation for adding further competencies and skills (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Figure 3. Te Whāriki.
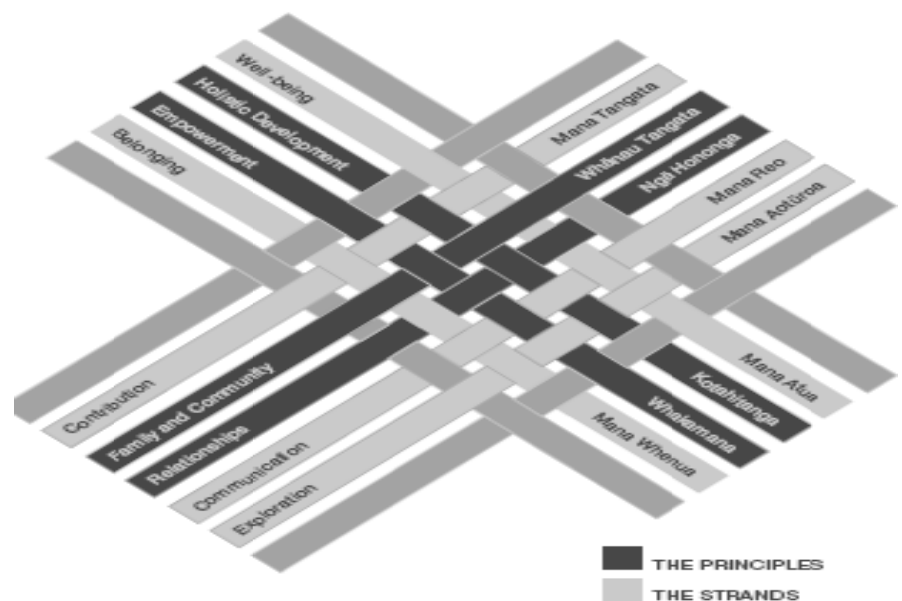
Ministry of Education. (1996, p.13).

Minor and Major Matrix

Turning again to sociological theory, I reflected on the word "dominant" and its commonality to music. What if the strands and principles in *Te Whāriki* indicate healthy social dominance, creating a comparative "subdominant" position? The idea of Maslow's 'lift" and Derrida's reference to "major"/ "minor" is captured metaphorically in the lyrics of contemporary songwriter, Leonard Cohen: "the fourth, the fifth, The minor fall, the major lift" (1984). As a guitarist with an interest in music theory, I liked the poignancy of Cohen's images of "fourths" (subdominant), "fifths" (dominant), "minor fall" and "major lift". This musical motif helped capture parallel sociological ideas: "subordinate," "dominant," "marginalised," and "social agency". Cohen invokes another image elsewhere: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in" (1992). Light permeating through cracks resonates with Derrida's reference to major illuminations emanating from the place of "difference". This gap between "subdominant" / "dominant," and "minor" / "major" is potentially enlightening.

Figure 4. Minor/Major Matrix. Adapted from *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Minor/Subdominant	Major/ Dominant Position
	Te Wharaki Principles

- Disempowerment — Empowerment – whakamana
- Fragmentation — Holistic development – kotahitanga
- Institutionalism/Bureaucracy — Family/community – whānau tāngata
- Disengagement — Relationships – ngā hononga

Te Whariki Strands

- Silenced discourse — Communication – mana reo
- Ill-health — Well-being – mana atua
- Marginalisation — Belonging – mana whenua
- Withdrawal — Contribution – mana tāngata
- Passivity — Exploration – mana aotūroa

I formed a major/minor, fourth/fifth, subdominant/dominant matrix from these binaries. The "major" words are taken from the curriculum principles and strands in *Te Whāriki*. Sociological antonyms were used to express the "minor" position. The principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* are positioned on the right in this matrix in the major or dominant (5th) position. The antonyms on the left, the headings, and this sociological interpretation of *Te Whāriki*'s vocabulary are original. These concepts of "minor fall" and "major lift" and the theoretical tool of *Te Whāriki's* pedagogy are used to analyse and synthesise the findings.

Alignment with *The New Zealand Curriculum*

Figure 5. **The key competencies: Cross-sector alignment**
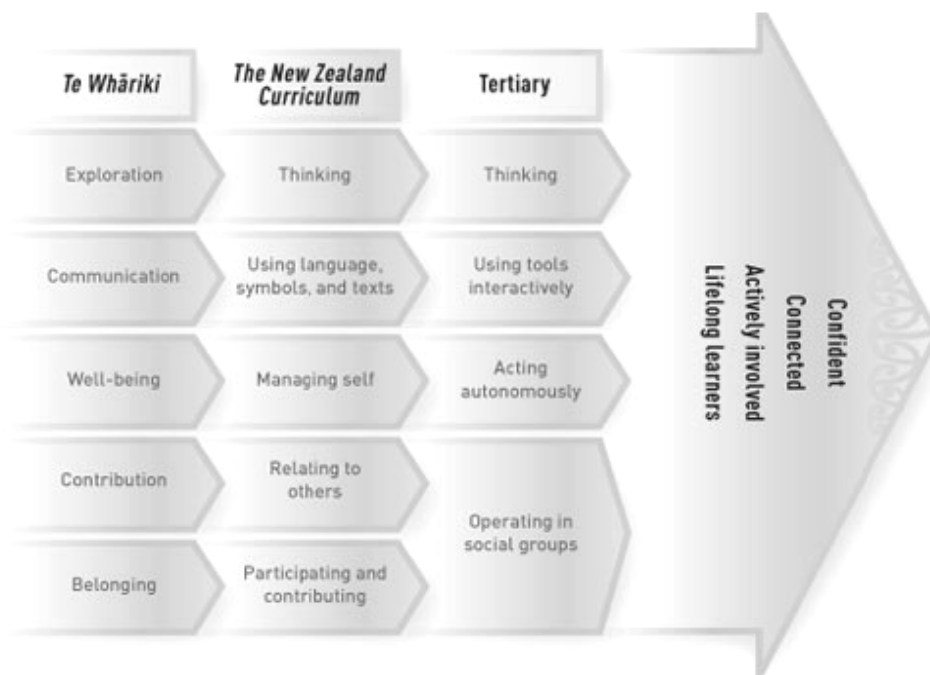
Ministry of Education (2007).

Te Whāriki, as a pedagogical framework, unites the previously discussed Pākeha value of education and the Māori value of a community of people. As a Ministry document, it derives from two strong traditions: Māori culture, and European educational theory. It meshes a Māori cultural emphasis on the role of whānau and iwi (tribe) with the Social Practice concepts of community development. The holistic nature of *Te Whāriki* makes it applicable across the wide

range of contexts comprising New Zealand society. Clearly, there is a cross-sector curricula connection, demonstrated visually (see figure 5). *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) states: "this diagram suggests how the tertiary competencies **align** [my emphasis] with those of *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum*". Furthermore, it says tertiary education "**builds on** [my emphasis] the values, competencies, discipline knowledge, and qualifications that students have developed or gained during their school years" (Ministry of Education, p.42). *Te Whāriki* (1996) provides "an educational **foundation** [my emphasis] that supports the full range of skills that children will need as life-long learners" (Ministry of Education, p.18). *Te Whāriki* is the foundation on which further learning from *The New Zealand Curriculum* in years 1 to 13 is added. Tertiary, in turn, adds a further layer of learning to this educational structure.

Holistic Models of Education

Holistic development is one of the principles in *Te Whāriki* with the wider aspiration children will grow up "…as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.9). It is an empowering view of education. Gender inclusive, the text stresses learning rather than academic ability. Children occupy a place of belonging and contribution, denoting reciprocal community relationships.

Drewery and Bird (2007) point out *Te Whāriki*'s holistic values - respecting mana and culture, demonstrating aroha and manāki and showing inclusiveness. Well-being, a strand in *Te Whāriki,* involves protecting and nurturing the physical and emotional health of the child. Interestingly, at a tertiary level Unitec's *Community Studies* booklet likewise expresses holism in its educational objective for the Certificate in Community Skills. The aim is to develop personal, social, academic, interpersonal and practical skills, to provide knowledge to become effective in the workplace and life, to increase social awareness, to clarify purpose and to boost confidence (Unitec, 2007).

Knowledge of Māori definitions and practice of health and well-being is deemed important in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996). I turned to *Health and physical education in the New Zealand curriculum* to check for curricula alignment. This Ministry of Education (1999) document begins with a Māori quote that translates: "positive feelings in your

heart will raise your sense of self-worth" (p.4). Health and well-being is constructed as holistic, impacting academic performance. It is equated with life-style, and active contribution to the well-being of others and the community. It includes hauora – a "Māori philosophy of health unique to New Zealand" (Ministry of Education, p.31). The curriculum (see figure 6) depicts Durie's (1994) whare tapawhā (four sided house) model of hauora – physical, mental and emotional, social and spiritual well-being – likening the whole person to that of a four-walled

Figure 6. Te whare tapawhā model.
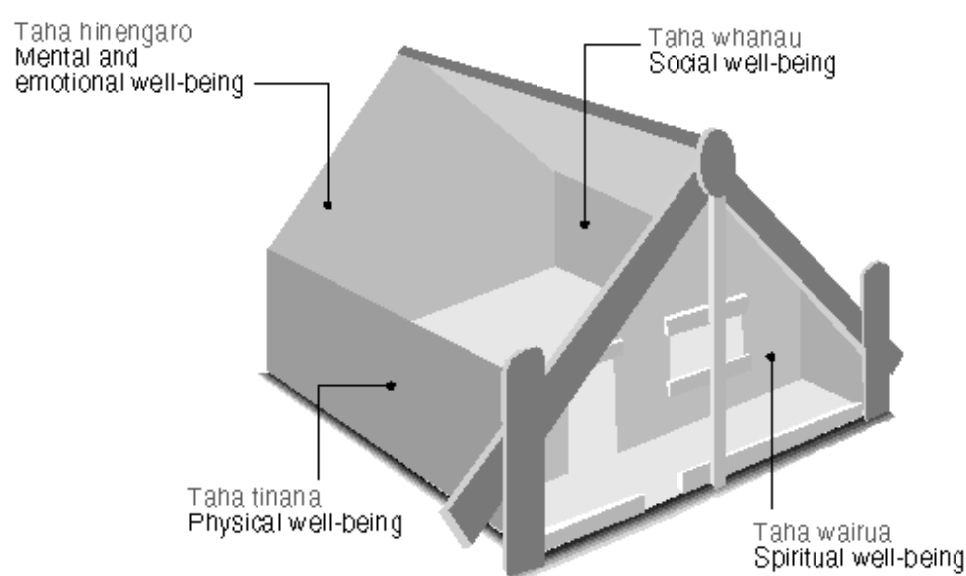
Ministry of Education (1999, p.31). Adapted from Durie, M. (1994).

whare or house (Ministry of Education, p.30). Durie argues (2001) good health requires synergy – "the dynamic interaction of people with each other as well as with wider cultural, social, economic, political environments… the variables acting together" (p. *ix*). Whole people and communities working together can produce more than they can do alone.

This idea is echoed in the Health Curriculum's health promotion model (see figure 7) deriving from the World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter (1986). Health is promoted through developing community links; empowerment; advocating for enhanced well-being;

creating safe physical and emotional environments; and developing supportive policies and practices (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 32). This is a holistic way to consider global health. It

Figure 7. Health promotion.
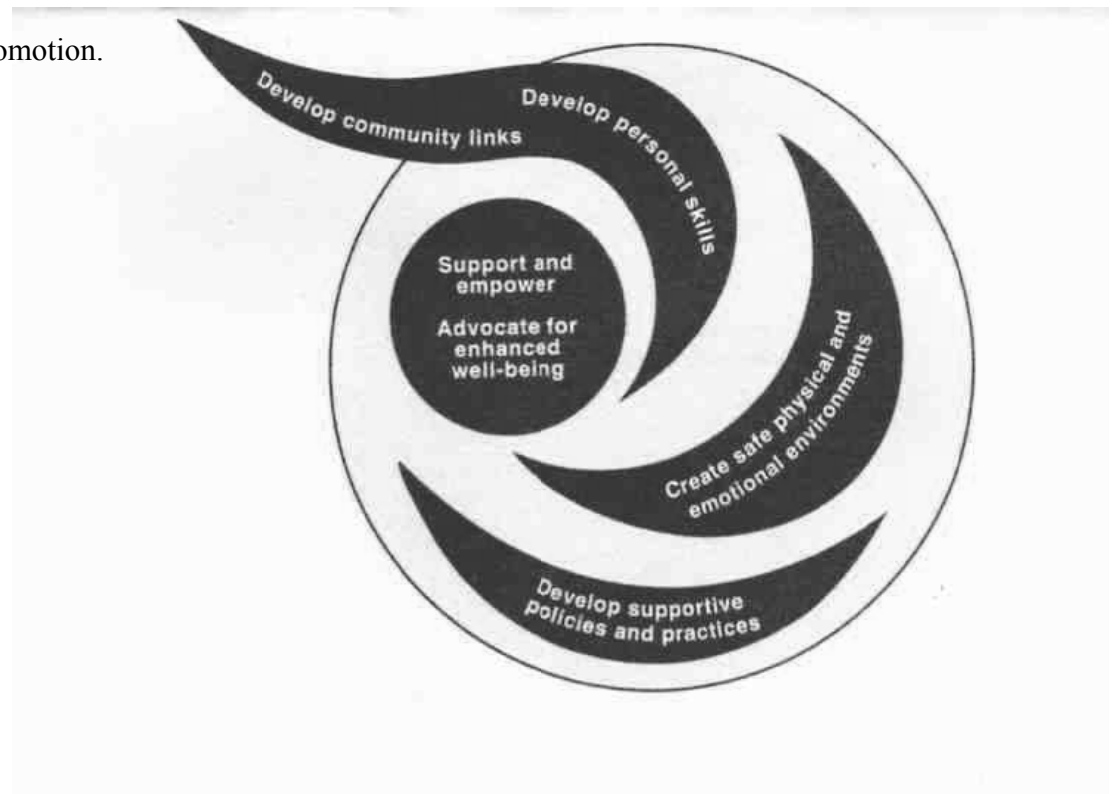
Ministry of Education (1999, p.32). Adapted from Ottawa Charter, (World Health Organisation, 1986.)

is similar to a socio-ecological perspective which emphasises health on three interlinking levels – self, others and society (Ministry of Education, 1999). Positive attitudes and values are part of good health. This includes valuing oneself and others. A list of healthy values and attitudes include: respect for others' personal rights, rangimārie (peace), open-mindedness, care, cooperation, āwhina, aroha, manāki, compassion, mahi ā ngākau (work of love), constructive challenge and competition, and positive participation. It involves a sense of social justice, and non-discriminatory practices (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.34). Figure 8 shows these four models of holistic health as a flax weaving. There is a curricula alignment with Māori holism, the community, well-being, and values that include social justice and aroha.

Figure 8. Key areas of learning.
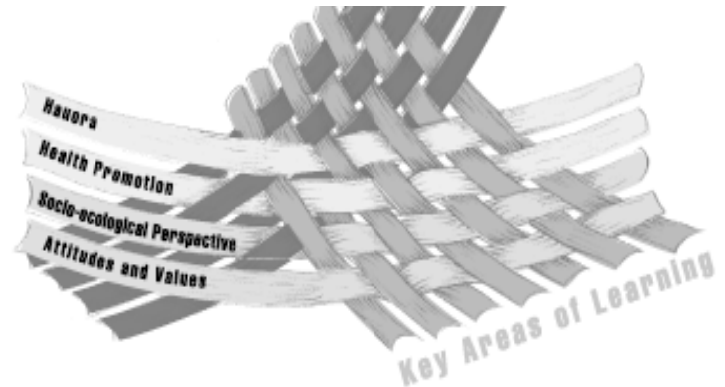
Ministry of Education (1999. p. 35).

This provided an all-encompassing definition of what holism meant. It is as wide as policy and as personal as values and attitudes. It involves social justice and fairness at all levels of society. The Ministry of Education has defined a healthy society. *Te Whāriki*'s alignment with educational theory is considered next.

CHAPTER FIVE

Links to Other Literature

Bronfenbrenner

Te Whāraki embraces Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model (Ministry of Education, 1996) in which he argues (2005) students are socially situated within systems that perpetuate culture and class. Individual attainment is improved through strengthening links between these systems. The individual's immediate world (such as family or school) is the microsystem. The mesosystem links microsystems (such as parent-teacher interviews); the exosystem indirectly influences the person (such as parental workplace); and the macrosystem includes indirect societal influences (such as governmental policies). Bronfenbrenner suggests strong links transform outcomes, with family background being the most influential factor in educational achievement, followed by the school environment (Coleman, 1966, in Bronfenbrenner, 2005a). After around thirteen years of age, the influence of peers on behaviour increases - especially where there is limited parental input (Bowerman and Kinch, 1959 in Bronfenbrenner, 2005a). Involving children in community roles such as assisting the elderly may develop depth of character and "moral identity" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005a). Bronfenbrenner (2005b) suggests the family unit is the most effective and inexpensive way to develop children cognitively and socially, with the home being a site of shared learning.

Figure 9 from *Te Whāriki* shows four levels of social environments. Level one shows the learner and the immediate learning environment (such as the high school student). Level two is the immediate environment and relationships between the systems (such as family and school). Level three shows the adults' environment as it impacts on the learner (such as tertiary involvement where parents model studying). Level four is national policies that impact indirectly upon the learner in their school (such as national funding) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, in Ministry of Education, 1996).

Figure 9. Levels of learning.

Levels of Learning

Level One

The learner engaged with the learning environment:

- learning to respond to challenge and change;
- gaining knowledge of language and cultural tools;
- having individual needs and rights met, and developing associated responsibilities;
- responsive and reciprocal relationships.

Level Two

The immediate learning environments and relationships between them:

- home and family;
- early childhood education settings and the people in them.

Level Three

The adults' environment as it influences their capacity to care and educate:

- professionalism of all adults;
- professional support;
- collegial development and opportunities for further learning;
- kinship networks;
- friendship networks.

Level Four

The nation's beliefs and values about children and early childhood care and education.

Based on pp. 22 – 27 of *The Ecology of Human Development* by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Copyright © 1979 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Used by permission of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Ministry of Education. (1996, p.19). Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979).

Erikson

Erikson's (1977) psychosocial model informs the Level Four *Identity and Communication* course. Erikson cites biology, psychology and the social sciences as influential to his work, explaining the trichotomy as holistic. For example, in adverse situations negative emotions may create somatic tension (body), individual anxiety (mind), and group panic (emotions). Erikson (1977) describes self-esteem as "steps towards a tangible future" and "a defined self within a social reality" (p.212). Pivotal to this is trust - a sense of being 'all right' (p.224). Other psychosocial stages include: autonomy ("standing on his own feet" p.226); initiative ("the quality of undertaking, planning and 'attacking' a task" p.229); and industry ("systematic instruction"). Ego identity is achieved through inner and outer integration, a process of "projecting one's diffused ego-image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually

clarified" (p.236). Each stage transforms, adding to personal strength. Counterparts to each stage are mistrust, shame and doubt, guilt, inferiority, and role confusion. However, it seems Erikson's depiction of identity strength at adolescence particularly relates to the socially dominant rather than those in the margins of society. Identity strength, for many in subordinate positions, is developed later in life.

Vygotsky

Vygotsky (1978) suggests a theory referred to as the zone of proximal development. "The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state" (p.86). Proximal development refers to a child's readiness for learning and the extent to which the learning zone can be extended through relationships, such as a good mentor offering support. In addition, he believes acquisition of language and vocabulary enables the learner to view circumstances more objectively, which in turn impacts on ability to change behaviour. Ability to name and identify things is important in psychological change. Vygotsky believes learning occurs in a social environment, such as a classroom, and then at an individual level of applying skills to practical situations. Learning derived from social support is more indicative of potential than individually derived gains. This zone is where skills and capabilities are maturing that will soon transfer into autonomous achievements. The *Identity and Communication* course assumes many capabilities have not been given the support to develop. Relationships are a part of the process of opening up this zone of undeveloped potential.

Bruner

Bruner extends Vygotsky's theory by suggesting social support in learning is likened to physical scaffolding in the building industry. This metaphor describes the structure a competent peer or adult provides to enable a learner to achieve at a higher level they can reach alone (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976, in Wood, 1988). Bruner's image of scaffolded learning appears in *Te Whāraki* in the context of relationships: "Adults provide 'scaffolding' for the children's endeavours – supports and connections that are removed and replaced when and where they are needed" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 43). An adult I once tutored likened this process to learning to ride a bicycle. As I, the tutor, let go support, the adult learned to use her new study skills independently.

Gardner

Gardner's (1993) work on multiple intelligences and domains likewise influences New Zealand education. *Te Whāraki* speaks of children developing: "abilities and interests in a range of domains – spatial, visual, linguistic, physical, musical, logical or mathematical, personal and social – which build on the children's strengths" (Ministry of Education,1996, p.68). Gardner's definition of personal intelligences is useful to this study. The intrapersonal is "access to one's own feeling life" and the interpersonal is "the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals and in particular among their moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions" (Gardner, 1993, p.240). The *Identity and Communication* course includes the intrapersonal (identity) and the interpersonal (communication) domains.

Effects of similar courses

Studies indicate numerous factors that increase student engagement in tertiary education. These include: acknowledging multiple intelligences in education, offering courses in high schools as well as community colleges in low SES communities, and supportive relationships with tutors and peers (Keagan, Broderick, Drago-Severson, Helsing, Popp and Portnow, 2001: Higgins, Vaughan, Phillips and Dalziel 2008; Coutts, 2007; Vince, 2007).

The review had explored educational, social and philosophical theory, as well as curricula text. The next focus was on community development models and capacity building to consider parents as active agents in developing community skills and using local resources for personal empowerment.

Community Development

Ife's (2002) ecological approach to community development includes four principles: holism, sustainability, diversity and equilibrium. *Te Whāraki* emphasises Māori values of holism and community, and therefore this is purposefully aligned with Ife's community development model. The *holistic* in *Te Whāraki* describes a belief in a new unity that "is more than the sum of the parts" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 99). *Sustainability* is captured in *Te Whāraki* in caring for the environment as an important resource – repairing, planting, and developing a sense of environmental belonging (Ministry of Education, 1996). Cultural *diversity* in *Te Whāraki*

involves honouring families and communities with "different cultures…different child-rearing patterns, beliefs, and traditions…different knowledge, skills and attitudes" (p.42). Ife and Tesoriero (2006) see diversity as a way to safeguard against monocultures, "the modernist tendency to impose a single order onto everything, the colonialist erosion of other identities, cultural globalisation and the exclusionary discourses of racism, sexism, ageism and so on" (p.260). *Te Whāraki* is inclusive, valuing Māori immersion programmes such as te kōhanga reo (language nest) and kura kaupapa Māori, as well as Tagata Pasifika programmes. It uses significant amounts of Māori text and acknowledges New Zealand's multicultural heritage (Ministry of Education, 1996). Ife and Tesoriero's (2006) fourth aspect of community development is *equilibrium* which denotes balance, cooperation, and embracing "dialectic relationships" including local and national; individual and corporate (p.48). *Te Whāraki* equates equilibrium with reciprocal relationships that provide balance: "expressing mutual, complementary actions" (Ministry of Education, p.99).

Te Whāraki has a "bottom up" grassroots approach to community engagement, finding alternatives through the "wisdom of the oppressed" (Ife, 2002, p.90). It looks at existing structures, systems and resources to provide ways for local empowerment (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006). It embraces whānau, neighbourhoods, cultures, iwi, customs, and languages. Ife and Tesoriero explain the resources and capabilities are within a community for developing its potential, but the challenge is to find pathways for enabling its maturation. This is where capacity building enters this discussion.

There are six elements of capacity building described by Chaskin et al. (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh and Vidal, 2001/2007) which can be aligned with *Te Whāraki*'s philosophical ideals. The first is the *characteristics of community capacity* which includes problem-solving at a local level, and accessing resources to support the community. *Te Whāraki* is insistent on interdependence between the child, whānau, and community, especially for Māori and Tagata Pasifika (Ministry of Education, 1996). The second element is *social agency*, which involves individuals, organisations and networks in the community. *Te Whāraki* strongly endorses interactions with community groups and services and emphasises the importance of welcoming people to the centre. The third element is *functions* in the community which include planning, decision-making and governance (goods and services, information dissemination, organisation

and advocacy work). *Te Whāraki* advises educators to respond to parents and caregivers by sharing information and decisions. The fourth element of capacity building is *strategies. Te Whāraki* promotes strategies that are meaningful to the families and communities represented in the centre, including opportunity for interaction between parents. The fifth element is *conditioning influences,* defined by *Te Whāraki* as flexibility to accommodate changes in conditions, needs and aspirations. The sixth element of capacity building is *other outcomes. Te Whāraki* expects a process of reflecting, evaluating and assessing to inform goals achievement, while also recognising the many distinctively different services within the sector. *Te Whāraki* is positioned at the grassroots level of society, comprising of a strong family and community basis with emphasis on whānau, marae, and iwi. However, it is also strongly linked to the macro level of society, with its genesis as a Ministry of Education document.

Research Alignment with *Te Whāriki*

Biddulph, Biddulph and Biddulph (2003) analyse influences on children's achievement in New Zealand in a research document. Five issues emerge that are aligned with *Te Whāriki*. Firstly, academic achievement is gained through holism (social, emotional, mental). Secondly, it is gained through a values system such as *Te Whāriki* (1996) with emphasis on rangimārie (peace), aroha (compassion) and manākitanga (generosity). Thirdly, it is gained through creative synergy. Fourthly, achievement is gained through psychosocial capabilities of self-esteem, identity, agency and self-perception. Fifthly, it is gained through partnerships with families and communities, with reference to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

Community involves consistent relationships, networks, mutual interests, support, identity and connection (Rogoff, Bartlett and Turkanis, 2001; Carnoy, 2000 in Biddulph et al, 2003). Biddulph et al. acknowledge the complexity of the family unit and the role of whānau, which includes extended family members as part of the social group. Pere (1994) describes marae relationships: "Interacting with a whole range of age groups from the 'cradle' onwards exposes one to all sorts of human relationships and situations. One learns to face any challenge or trauma at both a personal and group level" (p.51). Traditionally for the Māori, community relationships were a natural way of learning knowledge and skills, such as flax weaving. The rituals, such as saying a karakia before harvesting the flax, also taught deeper spiritual concepts on which the society was based.

Biddulph et al. (2003) suggest low income levels and low educational achievement are linked, and recommend increasing social and cultural capacity in the home through raising parental educational achievement, especially mothers, to make a difference. They recommend empowering programmes that provide tools for parents and affirm cultural values. According to Biddulph et al., few studies focus on parental partnership in education and the community. They refer to Watson, Brown and Swick's (1981) South Carolina, USA study.

> The indication was that parents who had a support system to rely on were likely to translate their positive human relationships into a productive home learning setting for children….To what extent many of these parents have access to supports that in turn strengthen their ability to actively support their children's school learning is a key question. (pp. 25-26)

Parental agency is crucial in providing educational goals, behavioural management, coaching and an affirmative environment in the home. Biddulph et al. conclude the following are positive influences in primary and secondary school achievement: firstly, an emotionally healthy home environment; secondly, partnerships with home and school; thirdly, effective programmes for parents to support their children in education, including tertiary; and fourthly, community-based teaching of effective strategies.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model places strong emphasis on linking families with communities. Erikson's psychosocial model links identity formation with a social context. Vygotsky and Bruner link cognitive development to a social support structure. Gardner views personal intelligences as healthy self-awareness, and relationships with others. Ife and Tesoriero stress the ecological community, and Chaskin et al. encourages identifying and resourcing the community from within. Biddulph et al. presents the importance of increased parental and community agency for raising educational achievement. Within this wider social context, I continue to explore *Te Whāriki*'s alignment to tertiary education.

A Pedagogical Framework

The New Zealand Curriculum states *Te Whāriki* has a connecting and foundational role in further education: "As students journey from early childhood through secondary school and, in many cases, on to tertiary training or tertiary education…they should find that each stage of the

journey prepares them for and **connects** [my emphasis] well with the next" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.41). The key competencies for tertiary education - acting autonomously, operating in social groups, using tools interactively, and thinking (Ministry of Education, 2007) – is connected to the preceding educational goals. In this next section, detail is given of the connection.

Contribution, Relating to others, Operating in Social Groups

Contribution (mana tangata) in *Te Whāriki* is an educational goal to create equitable opportunities that affirm individuals. It facilitates "lift" from the tendency to withdraw from involvement by valuing each contribution in a learning environment that caters for all (Ministry of Education, 1996). *Te Whāriki* acknowledges that connecting families and communities through education is potentially empowering (Ministry of Education, 1996). To operate successfully in social groups, it is necessary to be accepting of others. Culturally inclusive, *Te Whāriki* advocates social cohesion. Relating to others as a key competency in *The New Zealand Curriculum* is to effectively communicate with a variety of people across different environments: listening closely to others, appreciating others' perspectives, negotiating solutions and contributing ideas. It includes sensitivity to know when to compete or collaborate (Ministry of Education, 2007). Conceptually, these three curricula learning goals interconnect.

Contribution is an important aspect of operating in social groups. For example, night school budget cuts of $54 million a year removes the capacity of a community to respond locally to adult learning needs, such as teaching employment skills to help address issues of unemployment (Booth, 2009). *The Western Leader* discussed the Education Minister's policy:

> Her figures conveniently sidestepped the fact that there is a genuine social need for many of the classes that are getting the chop…The important figures are not in the cost but in use and need. With more people out of a job, more worrying that they could be, with school leavers struggling to find a place, anything encouraging alternative skills should be applauded, not canned. (Booth, 2009)

Specialised tutors can contribute skills that increase capacity in the local community. Operating in social groups, contributing and relating to others are integral to each other regardless of

educational context – be it a night school, primary school classroom, kōhanga reo, or a university tutorial.

Exploration and Thinking

Exploration (mana aotūroa) as an educational goal in *Te Whāriki* provides meaningful and spontaneous learning opportunities that foster confidence and self-mastery (Ministry of Education, 1996). It facilitates "lift" by encouraging passive members of society to be active agents in their own learning and discovery. As a key competency in *The New Zealand Curriculum* this relates to imagination, creativity, analytical reflection, interpretation, and the generation of ideas. It includes the ability to conduct research, organise information, question assumptions, and evaluate data. It enables thoughtful decisions, meaningful action, and logical conclusions. Thinking is driven by a curiosity to explore issues, to solve problems and to learn from exploring elements, techniques and principles. Exploring and thinking are aspects of investigation, which is at the heart of the inquiry model of education (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Well-being, Managing Self, and Acting Autonomously

Well-being or mana atua as a goal in *Te Whāriki* promotes health in all areas of life, nurtures emotions, and provides safety from harm. It provides "lift" where there is a lack of self-motivation, self-respect and dignity. At a social level, lack of well-being may be expressed in a community that is depressed, unemployed, and tending toward petty crime. Chapman et al. (2002) found the longer someone lacks work, the more likely they are to resort to crime (in White and Habibis, 2005). In *The National Curriculum,* the concept of self-management involves an intrinsic sense of motivation and self-belief. It includes focusing on personal direction and a desire to excel. There is a sense of identity, belonging and self-discipline. In addition, self-management involves initiative, self-reliance, and ability to withstand difficulty. There is inner character to confront situations effectively and to be an efficient team member (Ministry of Education, 2007). Well-being is linked to positive self-management and autonomy.

Belonging, Participating and Contributing, Acting Autonomously

Belonging (mana whenua) in *Te Whāriki* connects the student, extended family and community. It facilitates "lift" from marginalisation in society. It includes participation in the common good and care for the environment. This key competency in *The New Zealand Curriculum* of participating and contributing can be regional or international. It can relate to involvement at the marae, sports field, hobby classes, local church or ethnic club. It may involve instruction, employment or leisure activities. It includes the ability to function as a team member in a variety of roles and responsibilities. Team belonging and connection creates synergy. For example, Johansen (1954) suggests solidarity and manāki helps to maintain mana and power (in Reilly, 2008). This theme pervades educational theory such as Bronfenbrenner's (2005e) systemic linkage to create more powerful results than lone endeavours, or Vygotsky's (1978) suggested synergy where individual children are supported beyond the "additive" to the "interactive" (p.109). Tangaere (1997) relates this theory to Māori where older and younger work together in a learning/teaching dyad (in Drewery and Bird, 2007). The synergy of Māori and Pākeha cooperative contributions in education has produced an Early Childhood Education curriculum with a unique holistic approach, applicable to every centre, regardless of social background, ethnicity, religion, or educational philosophy. It is a distinctly New Zealand document that encapsulates our national and social identity.

Communication, Using Language, Symbols and Texts, Using Tools Interactively

The goal of communication (mana reo) in *Te Whāriki* is to develop non-verbal and verbal communication skills in creative and expressive ways including cultural stories and symbols (Ministry of Education, 1996). It facilitates "lift" for those silenced by dominant discourses. hooks (1994) speaks of the need of the marginalised to raise a voice that cannot any longer be silenced. Communication is about being heard by all, according to *The New Zealand Curriculum*. It is to understand what symbols and signs mean in various subject disciplines, to translate ideas into appropriate forms, and to utilise a variety of tools (Ministry of Education, 2007).

This connection between *Te Whāriki* and higher education should not be surprising given the holistic nature of this document. Ritchie (2002) describes Early Childhood Educators grappling with these curricula principles of empowerment, relationship and family and

community in their own professional development as they practically "align" with a bicultural perspective. Trainees in ECE exemplify the connection between goals and key competencies as they integrate their tertiary learning with *Te Whāriki* and their responsibility to deliver the curriculum. I personally discovered this when tutoring a mature parent/student who started on a qualification in 2008 in order to meet the Government requirements in her ECE job. She sought to "align" her practice with her new theory and felt empowered through her success as a tertiary student. Nicholls (2004) likewise suggests adult alignment with *Te Whāriki,* stating the strands "also apply to older people as they move through life's changes" and referring to it as an "intergenerational curriculum that can be applied to any context and any age" (p 1). This ecological "intergenerational" application emerged during the tutoring.

Te Whāriki has been presented as a holistic model that connects to cross-sector key competencies as well as to intergenerational learning. Next I discuss methodological approaches to this study.

CHAPTER SIX

METHOD

Methodology

Qualitative research

Narrative inquiry is used in this predominantly qualitative research, with a focus on "social phenomena" – that is, the everyday world (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 2006, p. 314). Clandinin and Huber (2010) define narrative inquiry as the study of experience that is understood as reflexive story-telling. Stories are collected as data, and examined as text. This process of analysis forms new ways of looking at and interpreting experience using a narrative framework. The aim of this narrative inquiry was to hear the voices of the participants and to consider emerging themes in their stories concerning the impact of the Level Four course in *Identity and Communication*. The goal was for the subjects in this study, as mature adult students learning communication skills, to articulate stories concerning educational success. Some had not studied formally for thirty years. As qualitative research, this work was value-driven and involved generalisations concerning the data and an active style of writing (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Subjective, multiple voices, including my own, are present in this work. In addition, the research design is partly informed by developing theories as the study progressed. It is strongly biased by a personal interest in literary text and an exploratory mode of procedure. The work is open to verification (Creswell, 1994); the hypotheses can be tested or verified (Hilebrand, 1991, cited in Sarantakos, 1998). In addition, the concept of agency is interesting for, as Laub and Sampson (1998) suggest, "qualitative data exposes human agency in the processes leading to individual change" (in Elliot, 2005, p.121). I was interested in exploring the processes articulated by the participants that led to an attitude change toward formal education. Elliot also suggests qualitative data provides insight into the social milieu of the research subjects. This involved finding out more about the social context in which the study originated to find out what capacities could be increased at the community level. Elliot points out that from a postmodern perspective, identity continues to develop in relation to context, and is constantly reconstructed. She says:

However, post-modern scepticism about the existence of an unproblematic, unified, and coherent self has also opened up new possibilities for qualitative research to focus on the everyday practices by which individuals constantly construct and reconstruct their sense of individual identity. (p.124)

I position identity as a social and individual construct, with the women referring to previous self-definitions and new ways of defining themselves in a process of "resignification" (Butler, 1990 in Elliot, 2005). Narratives bring unity to autobiographical script by designating structure or, as Gubrium et al. call it, "a life line" (1994 in Elliot, p. 125). This term is pertinent to this study, with one of the assessment tasks being a "lifeline." The women are aware of scripting their lifeline and the unity it provides in understanding their life story.

Narrative inquiry

Ricoeur speaks of a "formal identity and a narrative identity" (1988, in Elliott, p. 125). The formal identity is an inherent identity genetically derived - an inner disposition, such as a gentle personality. However, narrative identity is constructed and developed from self-awareness obtained through stories (Vessey, n.d.). Some narratives may originate from the individual – statements that self-define such as "I like to draw". Other narratives are socially derived. These describe the individual and interpret their actions. ("You are practical, just like your uncle.") The inner self can be defined by contributing personal narrative in a variety of contexts such as a focus group. Elliot says the ability to communicate a life story gives a sense of empowerment, as the internal is made external by way of audience. There is a social dynamic involved in storytelling, including the genre itself, and as a researcher I add to that social dynamic. I hoped the women would find it empowering to externalise, through interview, their journey through the course and as they reflected on how it continued to influence their decisions. Elliot (2005) suggests narrative deals with "restructuring or reconfiguring" the past in relation to the current situation. Narratives are, in a sense, shaped by the social environment and the audience. They are also shaped by cultural discourse. Articulating stories can help challenge hegemonic statements concerning constructed social identity, such as "a woman's place is in the home". There can be a process of redefining oneself, whether as a student, parent, woman, employee, or as an individual.

Mixed methodology

This work, while mainly qualitative, contains mixed methodology (Creswell, 1994). The methodology acts as a bridge between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwugebuzie and Leech, 2004a cited in Johnson and Onwugebuzie, 2004). Embracing "pluralism or eclecticism", (Johnson and Onwugebuzie), this methodology is pragmatic and involves finding the most useful approach for reaching the research objective. However, there was a need to be reflexive to minimise the methodology's limitations, such as analysing ways to bring convergence and synthesis to these divergent means of collecting data. The frame of narrative inquiry was used to identify patterns, examine theories, confirm themes, elicit stories, and produce a satisfying account for the findings. Several methods were used to generate the narratives - interviews and focus groups, questionnaires within focus groups, and independently collected class evaluation data. While the study mainly involved a qualitative paradigm, it was interspersed with some quantitative methods so it was not limited by information from solely one research paradigm. It proved a creative and comprehensive methodology for effectively answering the research questions within the study's limitations, and the mixed range worked in its favour (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Triangulation

Triangulation is an architectural term to describe the process of lining up points to find a location using three markers as indicators. Applied to research, this involves confirming data from using multiple methods (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 2006). The data's validity was confirmed by using different methods to provide similar outcomes. Reliability was increased by repeating a process with different groups in different contexts and getting the same results. Interpretative validity was improved by ensuring different sources were used to confirm what was said by the participants and recorded as data. I considered the vocabulary and ideas of the research subjects and determined the research's "accuracy" based on their feedback (Maxwell, 1992, cited in University of Florida, 2009). Descriptive validity involved using a "thick" description and documenting the process well so others can confirm it. According to Geertz (1973) "thick" description provides extensive and precise detail of the environmental context and culture (cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 57). This type of description was added into the study. The data proved "stable" throughout the field work (Guba and Lincoln 1989:242, cited in Lynch, 1996).

Grounded theory

The research had an element of grounded theory as a method which involved repeated iterations of the research questions that were constantly refined. Grounded theory is "grounded in data" that is "systematically obtained through social research" (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 2006, p.174). I sought understanding from the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 in Merriam, 1998) and this helped me to develop the emerging theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, in Merriam, 1998). The interview and focus group questions were repeated until saturation point was reached (Krueger and Casey, 2000). There was an effort to capture and incorporate practical "everyday" ideas and experiences into the research (Hildebrand, 1991, cited in Sarantakos, 1998). In the final stage the emerging themes were confirmed, rather than looking for new ones. For example, part of this grounded theory process involved data from formal evaluations of the course. The last focus group, undertaken as part of Unitec's course evaluation process, particularly confirmed the validity of the data beyond subjective ideas (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, in Lynch, 1996).

Focus groups

Focus groups are structured discussions on a specific topic, evoking thoughtful responses in a relaxed and informal conversational manner (Krueger, 1994, in Hall and Hall, 1996). Using focus groups positions the researcher in the role of group interviewer, mediator, facilitator and recorder (Punch, 2005). The role provides opportunity to discover the value and strength of the group dynamic where ideas are confirmed and considered from various perspectives (Morgan, 1988, in Punch) in a way that is cost-effective, adaptable and information-rich. Krueger's concern with focus groups is that group familiarity can restrict deep disclosure, and dominant voices can bias individual viewpoints. However, May (1993) argues that opinions are constantly being changed and challenged through social discourse (in Hall and Hall, 1996). Those who participated in the focus groups had already practiced cooperative skills in the class and therefore communication was fluent and respectful toward others. The participants were used to sharing deeply with each other and listening to different perspectives while being true to their own ideas.

Graphic organisers were used in the second of the focus groups to help structure the conversation. Graphic organisers can be defined as overviews and may appear in such forms as tree or web diagrams. The defining characteristics of graphic organisers were presented by Estes, Mills, and Barron (1969) as a "visual and verbal representation" that considers "key vocabulary

of a learning task" (p.41). The purpose of this focus group was to collect vocabulary specific to the emerging themes concerning the course learning. Graphic organiser use questions requiring graphic recordings such as lists, speech bubbles and diagrams which, as Krueger and Casey (2000) point out, tap into a different part of the brain or "heart" to draw out feelings and imaginative responses in addition to thinking answers. In *Te Kete Ipurangi* graphic organisers are described as a method for students to communicate information and keywords in relation to given topics (Ministry of Education, 2009). As Moore and Readence (1984) point out graphic organisers are used primarily as an aid to learning, but they also function as a means of evaluating student learning. My goal was this secondary function. In addition, Capizzi and Barton-Arwood (2009) argue curriculum-based measurement, including graphic organisers, have been validated by more than 30 years of research. The graphic organisers are used in the second focus group and third iteration of the research as a creative means of succinctly confirming the substance of the first two iterations, as well identifying new patterns of thinking about the issues of the research.

Interviews

Interviews may be formal, using a detailed set of semi-structured questions, or informal, where the interviewer has a very small set of open-ended questions and has flexibility to pursue ideas raised. Concerns about bias include: interviewer neutrality, interviewee's honesty in answering questions, and the social dynamic between interviewer and interviewee which may influence the data (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 2006). According to Hall and Hall (1996) there is a rich and poignant quality to anecdotes emerging from interviews that is lacking in hard data solely quantifying social need. I sought meaningful dialogue around the participants' experiences of personal empowerment. Interviews involve asking questions in order to elicit data; I used ones that were open-ended and succinct which allowed participants to tell her story in her own way. I began with introductory and transitional questions, and then preceded to major and concluding ones (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

Reflexivity

I sought to be aware of my own positioning throughout the study. I looked at course material and theory which deepened my understanding of the course content. Davidson and Tolich (2003) assert that reflexivity is crucial to solid social research. Practically, it meant

analysing and articulating research decisions. This placed me as an active participant in the research process, influencing how I interpreted the data and presented the findings (Davies, 2007). Personal positions may bias research, such as social roles, personal history, beliefs, and education (Punch, 2005). Other researchers undoubtedly would have found other ways to present their findings. My supervisors offered additional perspective in the research process.

Participants

There were three stages in this research. In June 2008, Unitec introduced me as a prospective researcher at an initial meeting for potential *Identity and Communication* course participants. Dr. Geoff Bridgman, Associate Head of the School of Community Development, Linda Davies, Programme Director of the Certificate in Community Skills, and the course tutor were present. All prospective course participants were invited to be involved with the research. Once ethics approval was gained, and the *Identity and Communication* course was completed, participants would be invited to help. The first focus group was planned for the first semester 2009. The course had weekly classes at Massey High School with two weekend sessions at Unitec. Figure 10 gives the sequence of the research events.

Figure 10: Summary of the research stages.

Analysis of Unitec data from course evaluations & notes of in-class verbal feedback for 1st group Massey High.	1st focus group Massey High. 5 participants. 1 Whānau email feedback for 1st group.	Interview with DP Massey High.	Analysed data for 1st group for key themes.
Analysis of Unitec course evaluations for Henderson High group.	No show for Henderson focus group. Individual interviews instead. 4 participants & 1 partner.	Interview with course tutor.	Analysed data using *Te Whāriki* in response to previous thematic findings.
Analysed Unitec course evaluations 2nd Massey group.	2nd focus group Massey High.	Synthesis of data.	

Procedures

Focus Group 1 – 1st Massey High School Course

The first stage began with collecting evaluation data from the 16 participants in the second semester 2008 course. All students from this semester were invited to attend a focus group at Massey High, which lasted about an hour and a half. (Refer to Appendix A for the information sheets and consent forms, Appendix B for all the focus group questions, interviews, and whānau members' questions, and Appendix C for graphic organisers and findings for focus group 2 at the Massey High School course.)

I started the focus group discussion with entry questions, probed for stories, and then finished with questions that concluded the session (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Participants used a rating scale which gave answers tied to a numerical value. The use of cartoon characters elicited laughter in the first focus group, establishing a positive atmosphere from the start. Pauses were used to give participants time to reflect, and questions were clarified where needed to draw out rich data. In the focus groups, the conversational format allowed a natural time for thought, giving everyone the chance to consider the questions and respond. The five rating scale questions gave confirmatory data and provided opportunity for informal discussion around the topics. Demographic information on employment in the rating scale created hesitancy for some who felt their particular situations identified who they were, thus losing their anonymity. While Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that the optimal size for a group is six to eight, only five members were recruited for the first group.

The questions for this group concerned the following: the best and worst features of the course; one positive change for themselves or their family; what the words "identity" and "communication" meant to them before the course and what they meant now; how the course could benefit the community; and how effective the course was in creating interest in the family in education and tertiary qualifications. There were also Likert Scale questions about the location, cost of the course, and the impact of the course on the home and workplace. Using the school staff room meant I could place finger foods on the coffee table and provide hot drinks during this focus group. Emails were invited concerning changes experienced as a result of the programme. One email was received. The discussion was recorded during the focus group using two recorders to ensure quality and to minimise potential glitches. My husband offered support

with the focus group by providing a written transcript of the session. The focus group material was transcribed and analysed for themes.

Interviews – 1ˢᵗ Henderson High School Course

Next I collected data from the first semester 2009 course evaluations held at a second High School in the area, Henderson High. The intention was to run a second focus group, but despite getting sufficient acceptances, none were able to come on the day. However, four participants were recruited for interviews. I refined my questions taking into account what had previously emerged, but kept to the same framework, seeking ways to deepen the original questions. One way was to emphasise in the interviews that I was interested in stories. The interview questions concerned the following: what changed for them as a result of doing the course; what specific learning did they find empowering as an individual and as a parent; and how did the course help them in their relationships. There were also Likert Scale questions. One participant from this semester agreed to be interviewed with her husband. This provided a further validity and reliability check of the data. Again I used two recording devices and made handwritten notes.

Focus Group 2 – 2ⁿᵈ Massey High School Course

The second focus group involved going to where the participants were already gathered as part of a scheduled class activity, piggy-backing off another activity as recommended by Krueger and Casey (2000). I asked the tutor if I could use this class for a second focus group to confirm the findings, dovetailing with the evaluation process at the end of the course. All the students independently provided consent and agreed to participate.

I again reviewed the questions against the findings to date and prepared a number of graphic organisers to aid discussion. The idea was to clarify the relevance of *Te Whāriki*'s principles and strands to their experience as mature students engaging in a tertiary course. I also wanted to confirm factors assisting a transformational process – the "lift". This was to clarify that the words adopted from *Te Whāriki* applied practically in a tertiary context. Smith and Watson (2001) note: "…subjects know themselves in language, because experience is discursive, embedded in the languages of everyday life and the knowledges produced at everyday sites" (p.25). This suggests self-definition and self-knowledge comes from explaining concepts and words in the context of life experience. I hoped to find out what the vocabulary in the matrix

meant to them in the context of my subjects' self-knowledge. Would they "know themselves" in the context of words like empowerment or holism and could they identify how it relates to the classroom? I wanted to apply these concepts beyond abstractions to "everyday life" and "everyday sites". Questions for this second focus group were based on emerging themes of family and community; empowerment; relationships; and holism without any spoken reference to *Te Whāriki*. Participants in this group helped record data using diagrams. At the conclusion of the questions, participants received chocolate bars.

Informant Interviews

After the first focus group, questions were emailed to the Deputy Principal of Massey High for background information and then followed up with an interview. The main focus of these questions was the school's perspective of the High School and tertiary institution's partnership, the relevance of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to education, and barriers to life-long learning across varied socio-economic groups in West Auckland.

Another informant interview was the *Identity and Communications* course tutor. At the conclusion of the Henderson High interviews, I asked her questions related to her pedagogy. The idea was to find out if *Te Whāriki's* model had relevance in a tertiary context. The questions related to themes of empowerment, relationships, and family and community without any spoken reference to this particular curriculum.

Other Data Sources Used in the Analysis

Unitec staff attended a debriefing session with the sixteen students in the first course. I was not involved, but notes of the students' feedback were taken by Geoff Bridgman. No students were identified. In addition, the standardisation of the Unitec evaluation forms added to the reliability and validity of the data. On the last day of each course, the tutor gave opportunity for anonymous student feedback through written comments and answers to Likert scale questions. These data sources also informed the analysis. These combination of approaches provided balance that contributed to the reliability and validity of the data (Davies, 2007).

Ethical Issues

The ethics application was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee at Unitec. The research proposal met the Ethics Committee criteria. Using Unitec anonymous

evaluative data was the only issue of concern, but my Unitec Supervisors ensured there was no breach of confidentiality or intellectual property. The ethical guidelines derived from Miles and Huberman (1994, in Punch, 2005) were used in the study. The worthiness of the project related to its design to help the local community (Snook, 2003, in Davidson and Tolich, 2003). Informed consent was gained and there was open communication with the participants about the project. The participants in the study benefitted from the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their learning. One participant indicated that a "debriefing" session would be beneficial – which the research project in part provided by allowing reflection on the course. Other participants seemed very willing to be helpful – possibly reciprocating the helpfulness of the course and the tutor to them and them wanting to share this benefit with others. Confidentiality and anonymity was used to protect the participants. Individuals were not compelled to answer the questions.

The project was guided by careful supervision. It is hoped that through reading this research, tutors may benefit from the findings on tertiary education. In addition, Massey High expressed interest in reading these findings on parental partnership in education. Interpersonal skill development of parents is a topical concern in educational policy such as in *Positive behaviour for learning action plan* (Ministry of Education, 2009). For many educators, the analysis of *Te Whāriki* in a tertiary context may be of interest and I would like to be proactive about making a summary of this research available to educational providers through appropriate publications and seminars.

Analysis

Mixed method data analysis comprises several stages (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Firstly the data was reduced to directly inform the research goal. Krueger and Casey (2000) recommend establishing the purpose for the method of research; I wanted stories from the participants about what capabilities made a difference to their engagement in education. I transcribed the data, looking for emergent themes from the focus group, mainly on how the *Identity and Communication* course impacted the family and the community. This included: the family impact of participants modelling tertiary study and communication skills; the educational impact of participants attending a tertiary course; and the local impact of participants learning community skills. After dominant themes emerged, and the discussions had reached saturation point, the ideas were analysed and synthesised (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Saturation point

involves collecting data until ideas are repeated which determines changes in the process of analysis (Ravagniani, 1991, cited in Sarantakos, 1993/1998). The quantitative data from the Likert scale provided opportunity for clustering the data.

My second stage in this model involved data display. This included a matrix, graph, and lists. The third stage was data correlation. This included triangulation, where I brought together data from different methods to examine closely the same phenomenon (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The data consolidation, comparison and integration stage (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003, cited in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) involved connecting the themes of transformation, empowerment and relationships to *Te Whāriki*'s principles and the strands, and using these as a way to synthesise the findings. The themes were also connected to a community development model. They were further confirmed and consolidated by integrating Unitec's evaluation data and the Likert scale questions into the analysis. This enabled me to create a coherent unity to the work.

I listened closely to words the participants' used to help me construct a meaningful and accurate reading of *Te Whāriki* in a tertiary context. I felt that integrating the participants' definitions of key vocabulary could throw light on my ideas. I wanted to find out if the words – the principles and strands - signified to them something different from that which was originally intended or from my interpretation of the text. Did *Te Whāriki* have meaning or significance at the site at which I was conducting my study? This was the final stage of legitimating the trustworthiness of my analysis and synthesis. The pragmatic aspect of mixed methods means that practical theory informs practice, or what is otherwise known as praxis (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This pragmatism influenced the next step – the field research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS FROM 1st MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

Demographic Overview

The research initially involved sixteen adult parents, one of which was male. They were enrolled as Unitec tertiary students in a 15-credit course on *Identity and Communication,* held at Massey High School. They were all residents of West Auckland, coming from Glen Eden, Massey, West Harbour, Waitakere, Whenuapai and Bethels Beach. Seven students were New Zealand/European; two Māori; one Samoan; one Cook Island Māori; one Niuean; one Tongan; one German; one "other/European"; one "other" (Singaporean). They were in the following age brackets: 35-39 (2); 40-44 (4); 45-49 (4); 50-54 (6). Participants were overwhelming women, with an average age in their mid to late 40s. They had attended in their youth some of the following High Schools: Green Bay, Massey High, Rutherford, Marist College, Takapuna Grammar, Penrose High, Avondale College, Auckland Girls' Grammar, and Glendowie. While some attended High Schools overseas, most attended Auckland schools. These High Schools currently have a socio-economic range from decile 3 (low SES) to decile 9 (high SES) (Education Counts, 2010). The students' employment included: administration, student, self-employed, unemployed, homemaker, office worker, tradesperson, assistant manager, and nurse aid. One had recent post-graduate qualifications, but many said they had not studied formally for up to thirty years.

Focus Group 1 – 1ST Massey High School Course

The first focus group was conducted with five middle-aged women drawn from this Unitec course at Massey High School. Pseudonyms were used for each participant. One in the group was European, three were Pākeha, and one was Māori.

Firstly, they were asked how they felt about doing the course. Alisha said "feelings changed" from "panic" to being "[hooked] after the second session". Erica said "daunted - the personal sharing stirred up a lot of things. It brought things out so you could look at them. The lifelines brought on sleepless nights." Fleur felt "quite excited about finding new answers. It confirmed who we were and how [the past] made us who we are today." However, she was concerned about "fitting study into a busy life". Leslie said that "trust enabled confidential sharing. We were in groups of four or five and it brought us together. From then on it was fun. It

was great learning." Kim said "scared" at first, and provided an example of how the course had impacted on her parental response of arguing and hitting.

Actually you should be talking to my family, not me. They said, "Gee you're changing," and I was like, "eh?" I just had my daughter for two weeks. [She said] "I don't know you!" Two weeks. We didn't argue. Two weeks and I never hit her [at all]."

The group was asked the best features of the course. Leslie promptly said "the tutor". There was agreement about this. Alisha said it was "her teaching, the way she taught. She made you feel relaxed" and the lessons were "not complicated". Kim said they were treated as adults. "You understood. If I had a teacher like her I would have got past Form One." Leslie said that the tutor translated things into "personal experience". For Erica, the small "home groups" enabled them to get "quite close to those people to start off with. When you shared your lifeline you were sharing them with people you felt comfortable with."

They were asked about the worst features. Fleur found it difficult to practice assertive "I" statements. Instead of simple language, she used heightened emotional statements. "It was a challenge to own one's own feelings and behaviour and not put blame on the other person."

They were asked what kind of comments they received from friends and family about their new role as a student. Leslie said her boys loved it when she had to do homework and were happy when she got a pass or merit. She last studied about thirty years ago. Alisha found it a challenge to come back to school, though it changed her whole life:

My son was proud of me that I had gone back to school. I just completed a level two course in business administration as well. This is so different. I just went to school to eat jam sandwiches for lunch. Yes, he's really proud of me. I never thought a kid would be, you know. I was really surprised.

Kim told a story that demonstrated the extent of her learning transformations:

A niece died in [Otago]. Those people down there have no idea about a tangi - you know - a funeral. I got three brothers and a sister in law, and it was like, "Nan, come and tell these people what to do and how to do this." I went around, "Excuse me, we don't do that. Excuse me, could you please move those?" When I finished, they said, "Auntie, where you been? You've been in Auckland twenty years. Ten years ago you would have

walked in and yelled, 'Don't do that!'" "Well, I just do a course, boy." "What was it about?" So I told them everything. "Why, you should have done that 30 years ago!" "Guess what, I'm back." [Pretends to slap. Laughter.] I hadn't met the niece-in-law. She goes, "Is that the auntie you fellas been telling me about?" They go, "Yeah." "She is nothing like what you have been telling me. She is a good auntie." It's like whoa! [Laughs.] "Well, it's like, I have changed." "Now no one will be scared of you." But they still do what you want, eh? [Laughter.] The compliments. The people I work with, "Whoa, is that course on again? Are you allowed to do it again?" [Laughter.]

Leslie said people at her work – and her children - were interested in finding out more about the course.

I think my children are proud of me. And there's a connection there – sharing and studying. With my husband I'm trying to learn to communicate better. Communication blockers. Before the course I had feelings but now I have words to go with the feelings. Now I can communicate better. I have the understandings, the words now, not just the feelings.

Fleur's twin had commented to Fleur that she had observed some changes and new insights in her sister. Fleur felt that learning about self-awareness in the course helped her to identify and label her behaviour. In addition, she discovered that empathy and understanding for her become her "communication bridge to others". This included seeing more clearly "why people are why they are" since she can see it in herself. She has discussed the course with one of her sons, who is interested in psychology. It heightened his interest in her learning.

They were asked what one positive change they could name for themselves or their family as a result of the course. Erica said "self-awareness and increased self-discipline." Kim said she had "more control." Alisha learned "different ways of doing things." For example, once her Dad and son were "picking on her". Normally she would "sit and take it. It would bottle up inside" and she would feel hurt and "not good enough". They would "put her down" until on one occasion she told them she "could not handle it any more. After that, they were as sweet as pie!" Leslie gained "more words and understanding - acting instead of reacting". Kim achieved "confidence, power and the awareness that in whatever we do there are choices".

They were asked their study plans now they had gone this far. Leslie said three of them had continued with the Community Skills course in *Youth Studies*. Fleur and Alisha had signed up for the Community Skills course in *Counselling*. Fleur was still finding direction in learning, but the course had "started me going, it really did". Kim said that "family comes first, but I want to finish [the Community Skills certificate]. I am going to finish it."

They were asked what the words "identity" and "communication" meant before the course and what they mean now. Erica said:

> I thought it would be great knowing how to communicate better, but the identity part was the biggest part of the course - the self-awareness - the way you react to situations. You can see yourself doing it. So you can adjust, changing the way you react to situations for next time, and how you relate to other people.

Fleur explained further:

> Before, the words identity and communication were just words, but when I did the course it meant something to me in my feelings and behaviour. Now I know not to go in certain directions, and I know what I don't want in my communication. Before I ploughed in with just the feelings, but now I can be more objective, and stand back and identify what happened and why it happened. Now I can make a difference. I had a conflict a few weeks ago and while I bombed out on what happened I was more aware of why the other person was acting out toward me. They were acting out of the place they had come from so I learned not to take it so personally, not to let it dictate.

Kim learned "a better, nicer, calmer way to communicate, [to] take ownership of what I do and how I do it". Alisha said she had no idea what she was getting into, "none whatever". She thought "anything would help". While almost backing out at first, she now sees how valuable it was because she learned so much. She "always took what people said as true. Everyone would dump [their emotions on me], but I learnt to push it away if it's not true." Leslie gained greater understanding of her identity, with the lifeline assignment helping her appreciate where she had come from. She learned how to change to move away from a victim's role.

They were asked if they could think of any way they, as a parent, felt differently about the High School now they had been there as a student. Fleur said:

It is great having it at the school. It was a lot easier doing it [at Massey] than doing the next course at Unitec. I found it a real struggle to get out in the evening and go to the *Youth Studies* course at Unitec. Once I was there it was fine, but parking is a hassle.

Erica said it made her feel positive about the school and community. Fleur said the Deputy Principal came in a few times to see how they were getting on. Erica said: "Yeah, that was nice." Leslie said they used her son's classroom and "being a student has given us another connection with our kids".

They were asked before they started the course what difference they thought it would make to their teens' feelings about the High School if they went to study there on a regular basis, and how this prior expectation compared to the real outcome.

Fleur said there was no difference, but she did not anticipate there would be. Leslie had attended night classes at the school previously. Alisha said she would not have her current job if she had not attended night classes.

They were asked if having completed the course changed the way they thought about tertiary study, and if it changed how they would advise their teens concerning the future. Fleur said it definitely gave her "more passion and earnestness" about her teens being educated not just academically, but also knowing about emotional intelligence and communication. It created more options – a greater scope - than she had previously considered. Her older children had already been through university, and the younger child had ideas about Otago University.

Alisha said her son had not yet decided. "He's brighter than me, but I think now I am coming up to his level. I have more confidence to go out to help him find out what he wants to do. I couldn't before." Leslie said: "I have one child in university, and the other will be studying next year. My youngest is aged 14. Education is already important. I think you need some certificate, some training."

They were asked if they could think of a highlight that would be beneficial to the wider community, and how the course can be improved. Leslie was grateful it was offered free of

charge and has since been "recommending it to everyone". Alisha was "glad we have children [at the High School] so we could attend". Leslie said: "You become a better parent and a better partner". Kim agreed that "from cleaner to manager – [everyone] will get something out of it. You become a better communicator". Fleur said:

> I think this particular course would be valuable for anyone to do. Everybody could get something out of it [by] improving and [by] identifying [with others] as members of the community. With better communication, there is better connection with others. When you gain self awareness you become more assured and when you are like that, you become more attractive to others. Because you are comfortable with yourself, people are comfortable with you. You are more open, empathetic, and more secure to communicate.

Erica said:

> It's also a gateway to education, to tertiary, because it's been about 30 years. We've opened the door. We realise it's not like going back to school, and sitting in a classroom, hating it. You can think of going on and doing something else with more confidence. One, because you've done something recently and two, it's different from what you expected.

They were asked if they had any other thoughts around the community aspect of the course. Leslie said: "You are thinking more about what you could do in the community as a volunteer. You're not so self-focused. Wrapped up in your own little world." Kim said:

> You become more aware of what's out there. Like today, I have been in hospital all day with my mokopuna. [My] neighbour's mother just died, she was 74, so more aware of the wider community. You've got a cold, but they've got the flu. You've got a headache, but they've just been shot. It helps. Two years ago, it would have been "well, whatever".

At the conclusion of the focus group, there were a few general comments about the course. Fleur said: "It's an old course, been revised a little bit, but been around about 30 years. I'm surprised those with high intellectual ability wouldn't think of doing a basic course like that. It's a shame." Leslie said her son studied in Health some of what they learnt this year: "'I' statements and communication". Alisha said someone commented to her that her brother talks a

lot. "Was he always like that?" She said she did not know, because she had been taught "children were to be seen and not heard". She said before she attended the course and "learned about the 'I' statements and all of that I didn't even know I was a person".

Likert Scale Questions

Participants answered the Likert Scale questions at the conclusion of the focus group. I created two graphs from the participants' data from all three courses involved in the study. This is discussed at the conclusion of the final focus group. Some of the questions evoked spontaneous responses, and they have been included those from the first Massey High focus group below.

In response to the first statement "I did the course only because it was at the local High School", Leslie said:

> It did make a difference at the High School – the whole atmosphere. There was more friendship. When we were at Unitec, we weren't so close. I walked into University and feel a certain awe and expectation, but at the High School I came in and it's my kids' school and I felt I could be who I am. It's a familiar space. It was my son's classroom. I don't know if I would have done it somewhere else. Everyone stayed to the end [of the course].

Fleur said:

> I don't know if so many would have finished [the *Identity and Communication* course if it had been held solely] at Unitec. People might have dropped out. Unitec was like academic learning. The High School helped you focus on learning about yourself. It was a heartfelt experience. At Unitec the lectures were all day Saturday. By the middle of the day your head was buzzing.

Alisha said:

> I don't know if we would have got to where we are now if we hadn't been at the High School. We got so much out of it. Unitec felt clinical. Here we could make a cup of

coffee, sit in the lounge, then go back to class, and it was fun. I wondered if I was in my son's class. [At Unitec] I probably would have thought it was over my head.

Kim said: "It was more family oriented [at the High School]. Unitec was like a hospital – sterile. The High School had kids' drawings [on the walls]." Erica agreed: "It was smaller. Unitec was white with stark walls. I went to High School here, too. It's hard to pinpoint, but it did make a difference."

In response to statement four: "The course made a significant difference to my communication with my children", Kim said: "My son wanted to come to class because I went home and I was raving on, so he wanted to come."

Confirming data from a Whānau Member

Kiri confirmed changes in Kim. She said the course helped Kim "to get past the attitude this was not the kind of thing she could do" and to find it was "what she has always done but not in that structure". Kiri "thoroughly enjoyed hearing [Kim's] stories and watching her blossom". Originally Kim did the course on Kiri's suggestion, but Kiri hopes "she did it for herself, too. [Kim] now thinks first [before responding] a lot more than she would have done before".

Confirming Data from a Class Evaluation

In the standardised evaluation sheets given out on the last day of class, sixteen class members gave comments about the *Identity and Communication* course. Pseudonyms reflecting the class's cultural composition were assigned to the anonymous data. The first question was "How would you rate the teaching methods (1= little value 5= excellent)?" The second question was "How would you rate the content of this course for you (1=little value 5= excellent)?" The third evaluation question asked students to identify "what you particularly liked or found useful on the course". The fourth evaluation question invited students to identify "any areas of the course you think need improving".

The third evaluation question about what students particularly liked or found useful on the course yielded a variety of responses. Selina enjoyed the small group discussions and reflecting on the learning from class games. Although some of the content confused her, the tutor used "great humour" to clarify the teaching in a way that provided "strength, encouragement and

power". Luseane was practising "the art of reflection" as a "useful tool in everyday life. My mind has been opened to the differences and ways of others. I learn the art of group dynamics and how I function within groups. It has been most rewarding." Diane gained understanding through increased self-awareness about how to communicate more effectively with her family and with other people. Ana found the tutor's way of explaining everything useful. "She **lifts you up** [my emphasis] to the highest point you allow and not put you down [or make you feel] you're dumb."

The 16 students rated the teaching methods, using Unitec's Likert Scale with 1 representing "little value" and 5 representing "excellent value". The mean was 4.73. For these students, a tertiary course that provides "excellent value" in teaching methods needs the following components: "put to very good use"; "encouraged a lot of thought and involvement"; "learned valuable skills that I can apply."

Students were asked to rate the teaching content of the course using the same scale, with 1 representing "little value" and 5 representing "excellent value". The mean was 5. For these students, a tertiary course that provides "excellent value" in content needs the following components: "explained very clearly and [clarified] things if unsure"; "thorough, easy to approach"; "teaching methods were engaging and interactive"; "never boring. [The tutor is] stimulating; inspirational; wonderful sense of humour." "The lifeline and journaling was useful"; "I [liked] the barriers to communication; self-awareness"; "[I liked] group skills". The students enjoyed interactive teaching and linked the content with the tutor. How the content was delivered and who delivered it was important. As a result of the students' enthusiasm for the tutor and her methods, I interviewed her for further information which is discussed later in the results section. This written evaluation material confirms the reliability and validity of the focus group data.

Confirming Data from a Debriefing "Celebration" Session

During a debriefing meeting with Unitec staff immediately following the *Identity and Communication* course, the 16 class members verbally confirmed the reliability and validity of the focus group data. I have used pseudonyms to aid clarity between speakers.

Mere said her whānau queried whether she could "handle 15 other women …. I hate writing and reading, but [the tutor], the bomb, pulled me through with the help of the whānau". Mere misses the class and has had a few arguments but says: "I haven't hit anyone for months…. So do I buy a 42 inch plasma TV or do I enrol on another course?" Debbie questioned whether she was learning because "it's not normal to have fun when you are learning". She felt self-doubt. "When I came I thought I can't do this." However, she "really enjoyed it". "[I] learned a lot about myself. I managed to do a speech for Koru Care. It was amazing." Chen wanted to learn something different. "I've been strict with my own children. My daughter said, 'Are you going to learn how to behave?' I learn assertiveness. I learn how to talk in different situations." Vivian learned to tackle challenging tasks. "The course was great. My friend had cancer, and [when she died] I had to speak at her funeral. The course taught me … I can be mentally and physically brave." Siala spoke of her interest in improving her community skills and in learning to speak English fluently. "July 20th – what was I doing driving out on a cold Wednesday evening on that first night [of class]? I was very frightened." She thought the others in the class "looked more educated". The tutor, right from the start, "made me feel safe". She had not been to school "for years. My friends and family said to me: 'You have a confidence you didn't have before.' I've really missed not going to class [since its conclusion]. It helped so much." Soni felt he could "put on" his learning in his new job. A summary of this debriefing meeting recorded the fact that all the students were very positive about the course.

Analysis

I compared the emerging themes from the transcribed data and compared it to the research questions, discussing each in turn. The research questions connect to the framework in *Te Whāriki*. The first stage in analysing data was to consider how applicable this curriculum document was to the study. If the research questions could not be aligned with this framework and the themes from the data did not relate to the strands and principles, then this analytical tool would not be effective. However, if there was alignment, then *Te Whāriki* could be used to analyse subsequent data. It was important also to determine the extent to which the tutor's pedagogy aligned with *Te Whāriki*.

The first question used to analyse the focus group data is "will the study help parents become more proactive in education for themselves, their children, and their family and friends

network?" This research question relates to empowerment, and family and community in *Te Whāriki.* For example, new confidence made a difference for the participants in becoming educationally proactive. Alisha commented she has "more confidence" to help her son "find out what he wants to do." Effective pedagogy – teaching and content – transformed the students' attitude to formal education (Freire,1998; Friere, 2007; Horton and Freire, 1990). It was empowering. The Community Skills Certificate sensitised them to the wider community. Kim said, "More aware of what's out there….. You've got a cold, but they've got the 'flu…..Two years ago, it would have been 'whatever!'"

The next question was "how will the students attending affect role models they present to their children concerning study?" This research question relates to belonging and contribution. Participants spoke of the word "connections". Leslie said her boys loved it when she had to do homework and were happy when she got a pass or merit. "There's a connection there. Sharing. Studying." The community model of educational partnerships helped to increase the linkages between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 2005d).

The third question was "what effect will the teaching have on interpersonal relationships and communication at home?" This relates to relationships and communication. The teaching provided skills in improved methods of communication at home. Kim said her family told her: "Gee, you're changing." Her daughter said: "I don't know you!" During her two week stay, the daughter discovered her mother was different - no longer arguing or hitting her. Kim said the course helped her have "more control". Her whānau member, Kiri, said she was thinking before she responded. Others such as Fleur spoke of gaining new awareness of how they were responding to others, which helped them consider using alternative communication skills.

The fourth question was "what happens when parents study?" This relates to exploring topics, and well-being. Participants set new goals. Fleur said: "I was at a place in my life where I wanted new answers, new direction." Ana had the barrier of feeling "dumb" and put down, but the tutor "lifted" her up "to the highest point" she allowed. Well-being created a "lift" that allowed the students to cross barriers to discover new aspects of their educational potential (Maslow, 1968).

The last question was "what are barriers to learning?" These seemed to be addressed through a holistic approach to learning. A strengthened sense of identity helped the students confront issues (Erikson, 1968). After twenty years of not studying, Erica found that new confidence enabled her to get past the barrier of "hating school" to "open the door" to tertiary education. Mere got past her barrier of hating writing and reading through "[the tutor], the bomb" and her whānau pulling her through. In addition, the barrier of the tertiary institution being too far removed, too sterile and too unconnected to them was addressed through most of the class being held off-campus at the High School.

The overall theme that emerged from this first focus group at Massey High was that of empowerment through study for the participants. Empowerment is accessing "the resources necessary to enable them to direct their own lives" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.40). Kim gained assertive skills that empowered her in a marae (meeting area of iwi) environment to act with whakamana (empowerment). Empowerment is also defined as taking "increasing responsibility for their own learning and care" (p.40). Leslie and others in the group continued to study for their Community Skills Certificate, and Mere's whānau relationships provided her with whakamana to succeed. Empowerment is to "contribute their own special strengths and interests" (p.40). Kim became aware of her neighbour's needs and gained whakamana to become a "nice auntie" in the context of her family and community. Empowerment is to "develop an enhanced sense of self-worth, identity, confidence and enjoyment" (p.40). Alisha learned to resist being "picked on". This gave her the whakamana to become a person of respect in the home.

Aligning *Te Whāriki* with the research questions was proving an exciting pathway for deeper analysis. It encouraged me to explore this connection in more depth.

CHAPTER EIGHT
INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

I interview the course tutor on two occasions. The first was an informal meeting after the first Massey High focus group. The conversation helped me add depth to the original focus group questions as I tailored them specifically for the Henderson High group. The second interview with the tutor was formal and occurred after the Henderson High interviews had been transcribed and analysed. The goal was to confirm the extent to which *Te Whāriki* – without referring to it in the interview - could be aligned with the findings and with her pedagogy. The details of how the principles and strands relate in a tertiary context are in Chapter Ten.

In addition, I wanted to find out more about Unitec and Massey High's partnership. Could it be linked to *Te Whāriki* as a community development model of education? This provided three community components to align: a community partnership; a Community Skills Certificate course in *Identity and Communication*; and *Te Whāriki* which has a curricula emphasis on the community and family. Most of the results concerning raising community capacity are in this chapter.

The Deputy Principal of Massey High was interviewed at the conclusion of the first focus group. This provided a High School staff perspective of community partnerships, perceived relevance of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to learning, and an educational leader's perspective on barriers to obtaining tertiary qualifications in varied socio-economic groups.

Ife's (2002) ecological approach to community development includes four principles: holism, sustainability, diversity and equilibrium. This model was used as a framework for the discussion.

Tutor's Perspective on Community Holism

The Unitec tutor was asked her perspective of community holism in terms of Unitec's partnership with the local High School. Holism, as a community development principle, is to place actions or occurrences in a wider context or environment (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006). The tutor, who also tutors classes at Unitec, mentioned intergenerational homework as an example of

individual learning impacting the home environment. "It's like 'I'm doing my homework, so come and do yours'." While this might happen to tertiary parents based solely at Unitec, she does not hear them talk about it whereas those studying at the High School discuss it. "And the kids get on their parents' backs [to do study]." She attributes this response to "being in their community - a community they've already connected to – and it reaffirms that connection. They know the school is supporting them." According to a conversation she had with the Principal, these parents are also engaging more in the school. They are "showing up" for parent-teacher interviews, or volunteering in a variety of activities in the school. She feels the barriers of intimidation these families had in the past concerning the school "are being broken down". The tutor referred to the synergy that comes from the relationship. "Somehow they feel the school is backing the family."

Deputy Principal's Perspective on Community Holism

The Deputy Principal at Massey High told me the background to the course. The school leadership felt the Community Skills certificate could involve parents in the school and also bring tertiary education onto the school site. "If parents are involved in the school and in tertiary education, then school pupils may get involved."

This holistic linking of learning systems in the community – adults and teens studying at the same location in an educational community, and adults and teens doing homework in the same household environment – is part of the ecological human development model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and detailed in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.19). The parents, as learners, engage with the learning environment of the High School. This corresponds to the first level of the model. The parents then bring this immediate learning environment into the home through homework, cementing mutual student relationships with their teens in the home and family. This corresponds to the second level of this model. As the parents, through their study, gain educational capacity they feel empowered to access educational networks to help their teens further their studies in a third level of systemic engagement. An example of this is Alisha, in the previous discussion, who felt enabled to help her son choose a path of further study leading to a meaningful career. As parents are empowered to deepen their educational capacity and relationships in the home, they are also empowered to contribute to the school community as volunteers.

Tutor's Perspective on Sustainability

The Unitec tutor was asked her perspective of community sustainability in terms of Unitec's partnership with the local High School. Sustainability, as a community development principle, is to continue a function in the long term by keeping the input and output at an equilibrium (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006).

The tutor thought the course, which has been going for 28 years, is sustainable because it meets an ongoing need for personal identity – "who am I and how do I communicate that in the world. Everybody wants that." This includes "knowing I am a valuable member. Knowing my identity, what I identify with, and how to communicate in a way that gets my needs met. It's a core drive." Identity and communication is sustainable because it is relevant for all cultures. "It's a human desire rather than a Western one." The tutor felt the community partnership could be sustained through effective links between the High School and Unitec that values the partnership and makes it "as easy as possible".

Deputy Principal's Perspective on Sustainability

The Deputy Principal believes a positive aspect of the *Identity and Communication* course for parents in the High School is "integrating adults into education". He expressed interest in adult tertiary students on site in the High School on an ongoing basis doing a "trade type of course" as role models for High School students. "It would benefit the kids to work alongside someone a bit older who knows where they are going." The relationship could also be sustained through High School students studying some courses on site at Unitec. Strengthening links between educational providers at a community level is important for raising local capacity. *Te Whāriki* acknowledges the importance of showing flexibility to cater for the needs of the local community and neighbourhoods (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Tutor's Perspective on Diversity

The Unitec tutor was asked her perspective of diversity in terms of Unitec's partnership with the local High School. Diversity, as a community development principle, is to embrace multiple perspectives and approaches (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006).

The tutor said the course suits a wide range of cultures. There is a "mix of socio-economic status and educational experience, though the majority of them had a negative school experience and so they dropped out. I often hear them say 'it's been thirty years since I've been in school'". A few have degrees. Primarily parents of High School children attend these courses. "You are looking at mid-thirties to mid-fifties usually, although a couple have been younger because they hear about it through somebody else."

She said, however, that a "particular type of person" attends the *Identity and Communication* course. Most are women. It attracts those looking for "what's next? What do I want to do?" Some want new challenges, or a change from being a "stay at home mother", or they want more fulfilling work. They are "people who are starting to look".

Deputy Principal's Perspective on Diversity

The Deputy Principal felt the social practice emphasis on community skills is relevant to Massey's diverse population. While Massey may be perceived as a poor, low decile school area, many parts of Massey "are quite different from that". Many decile five schools are homogeneous, but Massey's pupils range in socio-economic status from the very low to the very high. This can create challenge. For example, most high SES children do not need support to transition to tertiary education. Their parents have already been to university and understand the system. However, for low SES children their attending High School may be the "ultimate goal of parental expectations. Neither group places a higher or lower emphasis on education. The lower group may place a higher value, but tertiary education is out of their range of experience."

The Deputy Principal believes social practice fosters an understanding of our communities. Most teachers are very supportive of the *Identity and Communication* course. "I've been at Massey for thirty years, with the community changing considerably. Many teachers take some time to understand the community because they have never experienced anything like it in their personal life."

Te Whāriki points out, in its discussion of family and community, the importance of acknowledging and appreciating diverse cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and traditions within the local community. Communities are not viewed as homogeneous. There are a variety of conditions, needs and expectations (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Tutor's Perspective on Equilibrium

The Unitec tutor was asked her perspective of equilibrium in terms of Unitec's partnership with the local High School. Equilibrium, as a community development principle, is to order the environment so as to create harmony and mutual co-existence. Applied to this study, this means that educational institutions in West Auckland work cooperatively with each other to strengthen the community (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006). For example, if one educational institution becomes strong at the expense of another, the community is unbalanced. Some educational providers become well-resourced, while other providers suffer lack.

The tutor thought the *Identity and Communication* course balances out a perceived gap or need in the community through supporting positive parenting.

> This is the spin off. I hear parents talk about how they are interacting with their kids, and exploring the ways they are communicating with them. How do we make it work? How can we be more positive? How can we be more assertive? That's a need in the community.

The tutor also believes there is a need for people to know their contribution in the community is important. Once they understand they have something to offer, then the community benefits. Some may volunteer at the local Citizen's Advice Bureau; others may train to become a social worker or youth worker; others may get involved in the Parent-Teachers' Association. They start to feel comfortable in these roles. "It engages community members, I suppose."

Deputy Principal's Perspective on Equilibrium

The Deputy Principal spoke of this unbalance in expectations in the community. High SES students are expected by their parents to do tertiary study. The capacity of the home can support them. However, at the lower SES levels the expectations taper off with the capacity of the home not able to offer the same level of support. For example, the physical distance to travel to tertiary institutions becomes a barrier through the cost and the difficulties of getting there. Another barrier to study is the lack of quiet space at home. Financially, the cost of tertiary fees

and text books is a serious barrier to further education. This creates imbalance in outcome where the High SES students continue to access tertiary and the lower SES students miss out.

These are all features of the disequilibrium that Massey students struggle with. Psychologically, a supportive network - such as one that develops through the Identity and Communication course or the school's academic counselling and pastoral care services - can make a difference, especially to the Pacific Island and Māori students who need pastoral care.

Ife's community development model connects to the ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and detailed in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.19). Linking educational systems through deliberate partnerships are important for strengthening the individual's and the community's capacity. The nation's belief about equity of outcome in education is played out at a local level in the community where national statistics such as educational attainment in a geographical area highlight areas of unbalance. I am suggesting we address this imbalance by increasing capacity in the home through engaging parents as first generation tertiary students in the family. By doing so, we intentionally interrupt intergenerational cycles of disengagement in higher education. We create a support system in the home for teens to engage in tertiary. It is an avenue of increasing local capacity that leads to greater equilibrium and diversity in educational outcomes. It is a grassroots community development model of education.

These two interviews provided confirmation that increasing community partnerships and capacity through educational partnerships is foundational to good pedagogy. *Te Whāriki* and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of community and educational linkages is compatible with Ife's community development model that embraces diversity, sustainability, equilibrium and holism in the community. This provided groundwork for looking more closely at *Te Whāriki* to find out how the principles and strands align with the further research findings.

CHAPTER NINE

RESULTS FROM HENDERSON HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

Demographic Overview

The research at Henderson High involved ten adult Unitec tertiary students enrolled in the *Identity and Communication* course. Four were New Zealand/European; two Māori; one Samoan; one Cook Island Māori; one African; one British/Irish. They were in the following age brackets: 15-19 (1); 25-29 (1); 30-34 (1); 35-39 (2); 40-44 (1); 45-49 (1); 50-54 (2); 55-59 (1). Participants were all women, with an average age in their mid to late 30s. In their youth, some attended the following High Schools: Massey High, Rutherford, Rodney College, Aorere and Glenfield College. Some attended High Schools overseas. Interviews were conducted with four women in this class, one of whom was British and three were New Zealand/European.

As I examined the *Te Whāriki* model, I saw the specific clustering of strands and principles comprising the warp and the weft of the weaving. (Figure 3 on page 27) shows these clusters in the diagram of *Te Whāriki*.)   The cluster on the top left, which I will call the warp, comprises the intrapersonal - the felt or interior experience that comes through well-being, holism, empowerment and belonging. This relates to the emphasis on identity that the *Identity and Communication* course addresses. This intelligence involves the ability to have "access to one's own feeling life – one's range of affects or emotions" and to label and draw upon these to understand and guide one's own behaviour (Gardner, 1993, p. 240). The cluster on the bottom left, which I will call the weft, is the interpersonal – the connection with the external world that comes through contribution, family and community, communication, and exploration. This relates to the emphasis on communication that the *Identity and Communication* course addresses. As an intelligence, it is the ability to turn to others, "to notice and make distinctions among other individuals" including their "moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions" (Gardner, p.240). These clusters are used for the analysis.

Interviews – Henderson High School Course

Each woman interviewed was given a pseudonym: Fiona, Hannah, Georgia and Isabelle. Isabelle's husband, who was interviewed with his wife, is also given a pseudonym: Adrian.

Intrapersonal Intelligences - the Warp

Well-being, Holistic Development, Empowerment and Belonging

Mana Atua - Well-being

Well-being or mana atua denotes being comfortable, having energy, hopefulness, being at ease in situations, having equilibrium, being at peace, not feeling upset, possessing positive self-knowledge and self-awareness, and being spiritually strong. The contrast is ill-health, mentally and physically. This includes sickness, despair, intense anger, frustration, listlessness and spiritual alienation.

Hannah spoke of feeling comfortable in her "own skin". She was at ease within herself:

> What I think of myself today is huge growth really. I like who I am. I know I'm a good person. I know I can help others, and I have that ease within myself. I think that's one of the most important things for me, being comfortable in my own skin.

She is also trying not to "blame myself if everything goes wrong in situations. I feel I don't have to apologise. It's something I do without even thinking about it. I'm more aware of it." She is at a point of equilibrium. In her tertiary study, she is doing something that does not drain her as her last job did. She is gaining energy from her learning. "Throwing in the towel… would be the hardest thing to do right now." Any difficulties that arise are "all worth it". She is pursuing what she feels she wants to do with her life and gaining inner strength.

For Isabelle, one result of the course was increased reflection resulting in positive self-knowledge. Isabelle labelled the High School "comfortable" in contrast with Unitec which was "terrifying". To fit in with "masses" of young people was "a problem". For Isabelle, a sense of well-being in her study was achieved through an environment in which she felt comfortable. In addition, Adrian said that before the course Isabelle would look for approval from other people, but now she does not need that approval. She makes her decision regardless of whether others would agree with her. She is also more relaxed with their two children. She is not reacting to their reactions. Isabelle agreed that before the course she would feel "worried and guilty", and felt she had to "run around" them. She is now accepting "I can't do everything". She has a sense

of "letting go" and "don't sweat the small stuff" in her responses. She is more comfortable and relaxed within herself.

Fiona gained well-being through "not carrying around resentment" from feeling she had been treated unfairly in the past. She learned self-knowledge to defend herself in situations. She also learned to manage her emotions in a positive way that demonstrated a sense of peace. "Before this course I would get angry and frustrated a lot, even driving. I'd tense my hands on the steering wheel and clench my teeth." She does things for her own self-development such as being involved in interest groups. "I'm a believer in always taking care of myself."

Georgia gained greater ease within herself from learning to consider her own needs in situations rather than "rushing around…trying to please someone else". She learned to prioritise, and "take care of stuff I need to do" before committing herself to additional tasks for other people that would create "all sorts of implications". Considering her own needs and responsibilities helped her to act "one hundred percent differently" from prior to the course. She learned to think about her practical needs in situations and what truly suited her.

Te Whāriki refers to an environment of safety, emotional well-being and health promotion (Ministry of Education, 1996). The students indicated the course helped them gain skills to progress beyond their past into choices that promote balance, perspective and well-being.

Kotahitanga - Holistic Development

Holism or kotahitanga denotes completeness, full integration, and wholeness. It suggests inner unification. The opposite of this is fragmentation, emptiness, incompletion, parts in conflict and disunity. As individuals found out aspects of their identity, they were able to move from the shadows of others into self-belief and self-confidence. Tasks that helped the students come to a more integrated sense of self or identify included particularly the lifeline or whakapapa exercise and the journal writing, but also included reflecting on personal communication.

Hannah found journals "a huge tool" for "looking back on things". They helped her integrate her learning with "what I'm doing and how I'm interacting with other people". This ability became important in considering how to be fully present in her situations. Hannah was learning

how to bring her complete self into her learning environment. She reflected on the application of Erikson's theory of identity formation. She thought that while Erikson "talks about identity in those teen years" she did not have an identity at all until after she got married and "even then I was always in the shadow of my husband". It was much later on that she became more confident in herself. "It seems to be the older I am the stronger that identity is." Hannah said she uses the phrase of being true to oneself quite a lot in her life. This involves "discovering the sort of person I am". In addition, she was true to herself in group work. She is at peace within who she is. She said:

> I'm pretty aware of who I am. I still get my buttons pushed but I've found that the things that have been quite major in my life I've dealt with. It may come back from time to time, but it's not something that throws me into a huge spin.

The lifeline assignment helped Fiona come to a more integrated sense of self. She said it was good for her because it "helped me to realise why I was the way I was. You have to go right back. I had never thought about it before." In addition, a belief in personal potential and integrity created a sense of holism. Fiona said: "Definitely a lot of self-doubt is gone. Knowing I have so much more potential than I realised. I used to think I had no potential. I'm a person of integrity. To me that's the big thing about me." This self-belief led to positive self-definition. "I think I used to say sorry too much, but I don't anymore."

Georgia gained a more complete sense of her identity as a result of the course. This included acknowledging who she is in all aspects of her life and working on her daily development as a person. She said:

> The whole course was aimed at getting to know yourself better and being more honest and aware of yourself and your needs. Doing the course raised my awareness about a lot of things.

The lifeline assignment prompted Isabelle to wonder, "What have I done in my life?" However, on completing the task, she realised she had accomplished "quite a bit". This included a deep appreciation of her past as she realised: "what a lucky life I've had. When you hear some other stories you appreciate what you've got." This provided a holistic perspective.

Te Whāriki recognises the importance of integrated and holistic learning. It recognises the role of the past in the construction of the self (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Whakamana – Empowerment

Empowerment or whakamana means to enable, to gain power, to gain authority, to increase status, and to make free. The contrast is to disempower, disable, deny rights, diminish and restrict. The study helped students gain power and confidence in their learning, and they became able to focus their efforts on self-directed goals. For example, Fiona found a passion for study empowering. She explained:

> I never thought I'd be an adult student. It's never been something I thought I could do myself. But after the *Identity and Communication* course I thought "I can do this!" It's given me confidence. I used to think, "Wow! An adult student" and admire them. I've got one more paper to go after this semester and then I'll have my Certificate in Community Skills. I'm doing two papers this semester. The study's been good for me. I think it's addictive. I hated school. I thought adult study would just be like school again. I talk about my learning. I live it. When you live it, you can't help sharing it. I talk with my kids or anyone who will listen – or won't listen!

Fiona reflected on the impact of her study as an internal experience that creates empowerment.

Georgia felt empowerment through realising others had overcome adversity and therefore she could gain inner strength to put her life into perspective. The power of others' narratives encouraged her to gain freedom from feeling sorry for herself. She gained personal power through listening to the group's ability to "go through" traumas. Georgia said:

> When we shared our lifeline it was powerful listening to people's traumas. I felt less sorry for myself in hearing other people's stories. Normally you don't hear from such a diverse bunch of people. Everyone in the group had gone through some sort of adversity. It was completely different from your own and helped to put things in perspective…. The course made a huge difference to most people's lives.

Georgia felt that the course was enabling. The high levels of trust and empathy contributed to this. She said: "By the end of the course everybody was more confident. There was a huge level of trust and empathy between people".

Isabelle's newly-gained confidence enabled her to project into the future and take charge of it. She explained:

> Quite a bit has changed for us. We've made plans. We are reassessing where we want to be as a family. We've always had these ideas we've talked about, but never put them into practice. One of the reasons I wanted to do the course was to sort out my past and make plans to move forward. Do some goal setting. I've become more confident in myself so I can take this step now.

Participants were empowered to believe in their ability to achieve personal goals and dreams. Adrian observed that Isabelle, his wife, learned to trust her personal judgment. "You used to want to talk with me or ring me up at work to ask my opinion. Instead of asking someone to agree with you and needing reassurance, you reassure yourself." Isabelle possessed inner certainty. Previously, she deferred to others' judgments. It had restricted her in fully believing in herself. Isabelle said that when she first heard about the course, she thought she could not do it. She was too busy. However, she did all her assignments and got them in on time. "I got a good mark. It was quite a boost. I didn't do very well at school." She emailed her brother and said: "Look! I'm not brain dead!" The last course she did was when she was about sixteen and working in a shop.

Hannah said that gaining life skills and experience made her become more confident. Because of the course, she would no longer let people "walk all over me" for now she was "having a voice". She said "It's terribly empowering. I think it's a huge freedom."

Things that helped the participants gain personal empowerment included: becoming confidence, learning skills that increased their mana, finding inner strength through study, gaining perspective in overcoming adversity, and gaining the ability to be assertive.

Mana Whenua - Belonging

Belonging or mana whenua is about being connected, feeling a part of something bigger, feeling wanted, having a sense of ownership, affiliation, and feeling mutual support. It includes the concept of origins, and the place and land of birth. In contrast is a feeling of being isolated, rejected, disconnected, alienated, alone and marginalised.

Hannah made career plans as she gained understanding of what she wanted in her job. She felt she wanted to connect with her desire to become a counsellor. "The job I was doing … wasn't what I wanted." Furthermore, she needed to find out if she could "fit in" to the tertiary environment. She said:

> I knew I wanted to do my degree, but I thought I would see how I would go and if I can fit into this type of environment. I haven't studied since I was at high school. I'm fifty-three now so it was a long time ago. I've done a lot of work on myself over the years, but it was really interesting to see how I worked with a group. I learned a lot about myself. I thought I pretty well knew myself. But it definitely brought to the foreground what kind of personality I am and areas that I'm wanting to improve on.

Hannah's story represents a desire to reveal her "true self". She connected with group work, finding out her role and personality within that dynamic, and improving as a group member. Hannah was finding her place of belonging as a student in a counselling degree.

Fiona felt a bit "overwhelmed" when she first came into a class where she did not know anyone, but it did not take her long to meet some "wonderful people" who continued studying with her in the same classes. It provided a sense of mutual support that removed feelings of being alone in a strange environment.

For Georgia reaching that place of belonging was more of a challenge. She also realised she was "a pretty quiet person – it took me a while to get to know people …. definitely more of a loner". So while she found her place of belonging within the group, her independence meant that she did not make the "quite strong connections" that others made during the course.

Isabelle found her place of belonging in a different way to Georgia. "I just go in. I don't hang back. I go, 'Hi, I'm Isabelle.' I learned if I go in all timid it doesn't work for me. We gelled quite quickly."

Te Whāriki acknowledges these "connecting links" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 54). The participants talked about finding where they belonged through forming connecting links in the student environment.

Interpersonal Intelligences - the Weft

Contribution, Family and Community, Relationships, Communication and Exploration.

Mana Tangata - Contribution

Contribution or mana tangata denotes giving to others. This includes sharing, presenting, enriching, helping, and supporting. The contrast is to withdraw, withhold, remove, suppress, and to retract.

As students learned to be true to themselves it created authentic connections with others. For example, Fiona was able to contribute positively in her relationships in the home and not "rip" others off. She said: "When I married [my partner] I ripped him off. He didn't know who he was marrying. But I didn't know who I was either." Fiona learned how to share who she is as a person in the home. Georgia found the tools she learned are "useful and valid for everyone regardless of what they do in life". She shared with her teens about the course content concerning feelings, assertiveness, personal rights and responsibilities, and rights of others. The Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968) - with roles of the persecutor, victim and rescuer – was relevant to her teen's "hassles at school" and Georgia showed her daughter different roles being played out in the situation.

Hannah learned through the course to openly present her viewpoint to others. This included "to not be frightened to have an opinion, or worried about what other people think". It involved learning to "ask for what I want" instead of "shutting down … not saying anything….   it's an ongoing learning for me". She acknowledged she was "more of an observer. I do participate, but primarily I look at the situation rather than jump in and take over or control." She thought it was

important to find a balance, because sometimes her level of contribution "is a good thing and sometimes it's not".

Isabelle is a natural contributor which means that she can be somewhat overpowering. Through the course she has learned balance in the area of allowing others make their contribution. She was also no longer trying to "rescue" people, by "jumping in and suggesting things to help". Instead, she is learning to put "more back on" others. She has shared her learning with Adrian, who has been able to be more assertive with Isabelle, who is "listening more". Isabelle said: "You've probably come up a bit more [more dominant] and I've come down a bit more [less dominant]." Adrian said he was voicing his opinion more, as she was no longer "crushing" his ideas. Isabelle has used her learning to find appropriate balance in her levels of contribution to others.

Te Whāriki refers to valuing each person's input in the learning environment (Ministry of Education, 1996). As participants understood their unique gifts and perspectives, they effectively contributed in a social context.

Whānau Tangata - Family and Community

Family and community or whānau tangata denotes our birth connections with relatives, social standing and lineage. It includes our town or village, centre or cooperative. This contrasts with bureaucracy, officialdom, impersonal systems, and institutions.

Participants spoke of changes in the home. Fiona wanted to "make a difference in the community" but found that "home is a good place to start". She found new ways of practising interpersonal skills in the family and workplace. She always accepted people in the community, but since the course she acquired a different way of dealing with them. Her family also adjusted to her role as a student with her husband helping with chores. "The cleaning and all the household chores aren't how I'd like it, but it's about what's really important." She was re-ordering priorities in her family life.

Hannah gained skills in the course that helped in her family relationships. She learned to set boundaries with her adult daughter. While they could "talk about anything", Hannah felt some issues were better addressed by her daughter's community support group. She managed confrontational behaviour in her family by "sticking up" for herself. She applied her learning to

her parental role to define acceptable guidelines. She also "learned to adjust" to accommodate her study and to not "muck about".

Isabelle learned that she is entitled to the right to change her mind about her involvement in community tasks. "That one really stuck out to me because I have a problem. I always say 'yes, yes, yes' to everything and then I go home and think 'I really don't want to do that.' Her husband supported her in her study by "whisking the kids away" so she could take an hour for assignments. They also had a "pact" - Adrian had to be home in time for Isabelle to get to the evening course. "I said, 'I'm sorry, you'll just have to get home.' I thought he was going to muck me about." To honour the pact, Adrian had to trust his workmates to finish their tasks without his supervision. He said that in doing so "it's taught me a bit as well". This is an example of the ripple effect of the course into the wider sphere. Through the course content, students learn to identify and manage things in the home and community.

For example, Georgia said the course was "definitely beneficial in dealing with my thirteen year old". She told her thirteen year old about the things on the course. As a result, "I think she may be getting on better with dealing with issues." Previously, she had been "pretty demanding." Georgia was also "dealing with my ex better". Georgia does volunteer work in the community for an aid agency, but she is "doing less now than before. I don't know how I found the time to do things I did before." Georgia is carefully considering her use of time and establishing realistic boundaries that prevent over-commitment. When she did the course she managed her time by "just doing the chores at a different time". Each of the students redefined priorities in the family and community in the context of their study. All of them put a priority on strengthening the family.

Te Whāriki links relationships in the home with extended family, local communities and neighbourhoods (Ministry of Education, 1996). Participants gained positive strategies for relating with family and whānau, and in the local community or workplace.

Ngā Hononga - Relationships

Relationships or ngā hononga can be defined as friendships, associations, affiliations, and social interactions. This is contrasted with those disengaged from others.

Through their relationships in class groups, participants developed understanding of dynamics and roles. Hannah spoke of learning about how to interact as a leader in a group.

One of the group exercises we did was on leadership. It didn't worry me to be in the centre and have everyone watching. I was quite vocal that day. I wasn't nervous. When I looked at it, I thought this is a huge learning curve for me. It was a safe environment, so I took advantage of it. It surprised me. It's how I'm starting to think at the moment. In this safe environment people aren't going to shout at me. If they are critical it is in a nice way.

Hannah also learned about being open in her relationships with friends. She explained a scenario in her relationship with her friend where her first reaction was to "shut down". She was upset, but later she talked about it with her friend, acknowledging her ongoing learning around communicating her needs. "Through the course it did make me more aware of how I'm interacting with other people."

 Hannah appreciated the "amazing" support of the other students with whom she associates. However, she is firm about her need to guard her time for study. "I say to people, 'no, I can't go out for coffee'. But I don't like turning anything down". By being honest, she is setting realistic boundaries with her associates.

Participants gained supportive relationships in the course. Isabelle said: "One friend still emails me, and we did bond really well, and quickly. You open up to these complete strangers and tell them things, but I think it's because you know you won't see them again." In addition, Isabelle learned increased tolerance in her friendships. Adrian observed she was able to make realistic statements about a friend's behaviour – acknowledging "he's not going to change". Isabelle also became tolerant when confronted with members in the group who divulged lifestyle choices contrary to her own. She retained her original judgment of them as "really nice people…. You don't know, eh? You have no idea what [a person's] life is like and what they've done. I'm handling my friends differently." This less opinionated stance enabled Isabelle to externalise what was happening in her relationships.

Isabelle was challenged by the course to consider potential roles she played in her relationships. Before the course she would suggest ideas to solve her father's problems: "we could do this, Dad. And what would you think if we did this?" Now she says: 'what do you think

you will do?" She acknowledges that as a parent, she is "still a bit of a rescuer", but is learning to step back and teach her children to manage disappointments by reminding them: "hey, mate, that's life" instead of compensating for things that do not work out.

Fiona managed public relationships at work in a constructive manner.

In my job people come in with stuff they should take [to other professionals]. I could be so intolerant. I am able to handle [them] so much better than I used to. People would leave angry [and] I would be angry with them. Now they leave satisfied. I'm finding I'm able to deal with them in a totally different way than what I used to.

Relationship principles helped Fiona manage her role in her job more effectively.

Relationship tools helped the participants gain "responsive and reciprocal" interactions with others (Ministry of Education, 1996 p.43). The participants used these tools to good effect in relationships outside the class.

Mana Reo - Communication

Communication or mana reo denotes assertion, listening, exchanging information and possessing authority to speak. In contrast is the idea of silenced discourse, having no authority to speak, nothing to say, or skills with which to express ideas.

Participants reflected on communication dynamics. Hannah described being in a group and encountering heightened emotions.

One [class game seemed to] backfire. I was [among those] who stood back. It was a group activity but because I hadn't fully participated I started feeling guilty. However, I realised I stepped back not because I didn't want to participate but because some personalities were strong and dominant. [Some of us] could see [our involvement] would cause problems. It was an interesting exercise and the tutor handled it incredibly well. Those in the centre [of the activity] realised what they had done and were upset; they didn't realise how controlling they were. It was a power thing.

For Hannah, stepping back from the dynamic was her way of diffusing difficulty in group communications.

Hannah described the group as coming from "different walks of life" which created communication barriers initially. For example, Hannah strongly disagreed with one person's perspective, but as she listened closely, she acknowledged valid points were raised "coming from a different angle". Listening became important to overcome communication barriers within the class. She found the course helped her practise standing up for herself and speaking up on matters. She said that when she was working, she used "I" statements. "I felt empowered doing that." In addition she is able to look at it "from the other side too" which includes not feeling blamed.

Isabelle, likewise, learned about listening. She became aware she over-rides people in conversation. "Often [in class] I wanted to get my opinion across rather than listen to other people. So I thought: 'Okay, you have to learn to sit and listen'." The course made a difference to her communication with her husband through her "mellowing…. I listen more". Isabelle said a statement she learned from the course was: "You really hurt my feelings." She uses it sometimes with her son. "I say: 'I don't like that. Don't speak to me like that.' Before I would ignore [what he said]." Tools of effective communication were being used in parenting.

Fiona's challenge was at home, as she "struggled to communicate" with her teenage daughter. However, when she learned about healthy self-love on the course, she was able to communicate that to her teenager. "She didn't have that. My daughters now understand their feelings and why they feel that way. They don't discuss things right away, but I've seen changes in them which have been good." Her communication with her partner was also "much better…. Now we both know who I am. We communicate. I feel blessed I'm able to do something about it. Not leaving it too late." Fiona's communication was improved through authentic sharing with her teenager and her partner. Likewise, she learned the skills to communicate in an assertive way at work. Fiona said:

> I'm more assertive in my work. I was great at standing up for other people's rights, but not my own. I've been able to discuss it when things are unfair. As a result I think people have more respect for me. My boss gave me Thursdays off so I can attend a class. Before, I wouldn't have had the confidence to ask. My own personal self-development has been great.

Georgia is learning to communicate her needs instead of justifying her requests. "It seems to be very effective - not defending my decisions." She recently had to get some work done on her house. "I've been [clear with] the tradesmen about what I need." The course also made a significant difference to her communication with her children. One of her daughters would want something until it was achieved and then want something else immediately after. "Since doing the course [I saw] it was a pattern. I pointed it out to her…. in a way that helped it sink in." The daughter has since "improved in that direction". The communication was clearly effective.

Te Whāriki refers to communication skills, and creative ways to express oneself (Ministry of Education, 1996). The participants spoke of a range of communication principles they learned on the course which they used in sharing information and speaking with authority.

Mana Aotūroa - Exploration

Exploration or mana aotūroa denotes searching, investigating, seeking, pioneering, researching and examining. The Māori word suggests entering a "world of light". This contrasts with passivity, indifference, apathy, resignation, and unconcern.

Hannah was inspired to explore the theory of identity formation. She got out one of the course workbooks for a psychology assignment. She took a lot of notes as she explored the topic. She knows if she is familiar with her topic, she can talk about it easily, but it also stirs up the desire to "want to know more." She was "really interested" in Erikson's developmental stages. She described a class activity where they worked in groups to put the developmental stages in order. "In our group we had lots that were wrong." Hannah referred to a variety of methods of investigating a topic: reading, taking notes, discussing it, and exploring it in class interactively.

Georgia learned about her own comfort level and was challenged to explore a "better way of doing things". She has "picked up the handbook for relooking at things". She has found it "relevant to everyday life and it impacts on everything we do. And there is so much stuff in it that I continue to look up [information] I want to know more about."

Isabelle said that if she referred to the workbook she would "probably remember a lot more. I think there will be times when I will go back [to the book]. I can't remember all that 'flip the triangle'. That's one you can practise in your everyday life." When she was studying that

topic she "wrote little notes of people I knew who play these roles. We had to read about ten pages. It was on how people relate to you. This is what I would go back and reread."

Fiona was doing three papers and she also works full-time. "All these assignments to do! I have to be organised. I struggled a bit with the journaling because of all the assignments. Sometimes I do it and sometimes I don't. It's good [to journal], because you do forget." Fiona used journaling to remember her learning.

Te Whāriki relates exploration to children's learning through play, but I have used this strand to look at topic exploration in a tertiary context. The students in the course actively explored topics, applying the learning at home, workplace and community. They found meaning in the material through trying out new "working theories" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.82) in their social environments.

Feedback from a Class Evaluation Data during the Final Session of the Henderson High Course 1st Semester 2009

Ten students provided evaluation feedback from the Henderson High group. Using the class evaluation Likert Scale, the students gave the teaching methods a 4.9 mean rating, and the contents a 4.9 mean rating (5 represented "excellent value").

The following comments confirm the data that had been collected that links the course learning with *Te Whāriki*. The names reflect the variety of ethnic groups represented by the anonymous data.

The Warp and Weft

Intrapersonal Intelligences - the Warp

Mana Atua - Well-being

Students felt a sense of well-being. Terehia said: "[It was] very easy in the environment that [the tutor] created, especially as I hadn't studied for 30 years." Soana said: "[The tutor] makes you feel comfortable as soon as you walk in the door." Donna said: "The tutor is so approachable, so human, [so] full of encouragement for even the most reticent people." Fatuma

thought the biggest thing she learned from the course was "healthy self-love". Comfortable and at ease within the learning environment, they gained positive self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Kotahitanga - Holistic Development.

Students gained a more integrated sense of their identity. Fatuma said she "learned about my inner self. Who I am as an individual." Soanna gained holistic understanding. She could "identify weaknesses and understand a lot more about myself." Learning about their identity resulted in this self-knowledge and self-belief.

Whakamana – Empowerment

Students gained empowerment in their personal lives. Makareta said: "Every part of this course has made an impact in my life. I feel more confident in areas I hadn't before." Soana said: "The honesty and bravery of my peers let me open myself up and come out of my shell." Ruihi said: "I am definitely more assertive and confident." They felt more enabled and free to express themselves as individuals.

Mana Whenua – Belonging

Students felt a sense of belonging. Makareta said the tutor "has the ability to make everyone feel included". Donna felt "welcome and at home". Fatuma said the tutor and other students were fun and this dynamic "helped me learn more about myself". They felt connected to others, accepted, and part of the class.

Interpersonal Intelligences - the Weft

Mana Tangata - Contribution

Students gained from the sharing that occurred within the classroom environment. Terehia said: "I enjoyed meeting and working with such a diverse group of people and not only learning from the tutor but also the others. We had fun and we overcame any difficulties or challenges that arose. It was awesome to watch and see how others changed." Nyene said: "[it was] a great hands-on approach with heaps of experiences to share." There was mutual sharing, learning, helping, supporting and encouraging within the class.

Whānau Tangata - Family and Community

Students gained skills that helped them in family and community roles. Nyrene said: "It has helped me a lot of ways with my job." Makareta agreed "[It's been] really wonderful in situations at work." The teaching helped the students in their family and community roles, as they applied the principles they had been learning.

Ngā Hononga – Relationships

Relationships improved as a result of the course. Makareta said her relationship and communication with her teenage daughter "has improved heaps". Donna enjoyed "how we all came together in friendships". They improved relationships with others in the home, as well as gained positive friendships with other students.

Mana Reo – Communication

Students learned about communication skills which they were able to apply. Ruihi said: "I found ways to communicate in a constructive way, without blame or criticism." Makareta said: "It helped me to be more aware of listening to others and how I approach situations I'm not happy with." Soana said: "The content in this course has allowed me to come into my own, claim my rights and be an assertive communicator." Nyrene said: "[the course] covers a great variety of communication [skills] that everyone should learn about. I learned listening skills and how to speak out assertively." They communicated through assertiveness, listening, exchanging information and learning positive interaction.

Mana Aotūroa - Exploration

Students learned a variety of ways to explore the course content. Donna said: "Since not doing any study in 27 years, I found the contents of this course an easy slide into more study… the reading in the text books were very helpful. I'm glad I'll have the text to refer back to". Soana enjoyed the practical exercises, "talking forums" and booklets. They were "useful…a great resource". Ruihi found the teaching methods "really good. I found it easy to understand what [the tutor] was telling us. I felt the course covered a wide range of topics." Makareta said that the homework "really helps ideas to sink in and apply them". Terehia said she enjoyed the journal writing. "To be able to put down on paper how my week had gone and be able to refer back to it has been very helpful." Students explored topics in a variety of ways including: reading, doing practical exercises, listening to the tutor, and doing reflective writing.

Analysis concerning the research questions

The research questions are linked to the framework in *Te Whāriki*. The first question - "will the study help parents become more proactive in education for themselves, their children, and their family and friends network? – relates to individual and collective empowerment, and family and community. Both Fiona and Isabelle spoke about the academic confidence and empowerment they gained from realising they had the ability to succeed in a tertiary context. The participants also spoke becoming proactive in establishing boundaries in the family concerning their need for study time.

The second question is "how will the students attending affect role models they present to their children concerning study?" Being a role model concerns a sense of belonging and contribution to others that emerges from a sphere of influence. Hannah found her daughter very supportive of Hannah's study and observed Hannah's passion for her new career direction. Georgia found it beneficial to share with her daughter about the course content, especially the Drama Triangle and the roles that individuals play. In both situations, parents were positive role models – passionate about study and keen to share their study with family members.

The third research question was "what effect will the teaching have on interpersonal relationships and communication at home?" This relates to relationships with others and to communication. Hannah learned to be open with others in her communication, but also to be firm about her time management. Georgia learned to stop justifying her decisions and to recognise behavioural patterns with her daughter. Isabelle learned to step back from a dominant role in the family and also to use "I" statements in the home. Fiona learned about healthy self-love and how to apply this knowledge in her family role.

The fourth question was "what changed for them as a result of the study". Changes occurred as they explored topics, and had a strong shift in well-being. Hannah gained "huge growth", and learned not to blame herself. She was pursuing what she wanted to do with her life. She was learning to be "fully present" in situations and was actively exploring the idea of a stronger identity. Isabelle felt comfortable in her new tertiary role at the High School. She learned not to need other people's approval, and gained perspective. She was interested in exploring positive roles with others. Fiona learned to stand up for herself and to manage her

emotions. She had less self-doubt and discovered her potential. She used journaling to recall her learning. Georgia learned personal priorities, and explored better ways of doing things.

The final question - "what are barriers to learning?" - relates to holistic approaches that address these barriers. Barriers included a range of uncertainties and fears such as confronting formal study after almost thirty years of being away from it; self-disclosure to strangers; trying to bond with an unfamiliar group; being seen as "dumb"; learning in a strange environment; and failing. Other issues included: finding the time to study, confronting the need to change behaviours, and maintaining family support. Isabelle confronted her barriers to learning by focusing clearly on her goals which were clarified through her study. Fiona found her identity as a competent student through grappling with her self-doubt. Journal writing helped Hannah process and retain her learning journey in gaining identity as a student. Georgia increased awareness of her own needs.

The separate strands and principles had been analysed. The next stage was to confirm the findings in the second focus group and in the interview with the course tutor.

CHAPTER TEN
RESULTS FROM 2nd MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

Demographic Overview

The research at Massey High involved nine adult Unitec tertiary students enrolled in the *Identity and Communication* course in the focus group, one of which was male, and eleven gave course evaluative feedback. Eight were New Zealand/European; one Māori; one Niuean and one Cook Island Māori. They were in the following age brackets: 35-39 (1); 40-44 (4); 45-49 (2); 50-54 (3); 55-59 (1). Nine participants were women and two were men, with an average age in their mid to late 40s. In their youth, some attended the following High Schools: Tangaroa College, Lynfield, Freyberg High, Wairoa College, and Glenfield College. Some attended High Schools overseas. The course tutor was interviewed. The purpose was to find out if *Te Whāriki*'s vocabulary for the strands and principles were relevant at a tertiary level. Neither course tutor nor participants in the focus group knew I was using this framework for the discussion. I wanted to see if there was an alignment. The participants have a pseudonym. Structure was provided to allow them to define in their own words definitions for the key terms. For this section, graphic organisers were used. These are in Appendix C. The purpose was to confirm the findings from the previous classes within the *Te Whāriki* analytical framework.

On close examination of the *Te Whāriki* model it was evident the Māori worldview pictures a whole weaving rather than the warp and weft of individual strands and principles. I therefore realised in analysing individual components I might miss the essential qualities that bring the components together. For example, in the previous chapter participants alluded to one quality such as empowerment in the context of other qualities such as communication and relationships. While analysing individual strands and principles, I believe *Te Whāriki* is fundamentally an interwoven system of learning. I have demonstrated how the individual strands and principles apply in a tertiary context. Now I will synthesise the findings to show how the strands and principles interlace to comprise the strength of the woven mat in a tertiary environment. I will also connect this to the concept of minor/major, subdominant/dominant and lift factors (figure 4 p. 28).

Focus Group 2 – 2nd Massey High School Course

Mana Atua - from Ill-health to Well-being

Tutor's Perspective on Well-being

According to the tutor, "student wellbeing" involves recognising that what goes on outside the classroom impacts the student inside the class. For example, some experienced the death of family members, or have conflicts in the home. They know they are "not really in a space" to learn, but come because they need the support of the classroom "community". The tutor approaches well-being as a "two-way thing…. I'll listen and if there's information I can offer … I'll link them into services if they ask, but I wait for them to approach me." Self-management and autonomy is reflected in the students' commitment to their workload - homework obligations, assignments, and study.

The tutor clearly understands the concept of well-being and recognises she can be a source of strength and support. She acknowledges personal grief and upset, as well as interpersonal conflicts can impact on a student's ability to be at peace. Their equilibrium can be disturbed by outside influences. The conflict and grief emanates from the family and community. To assist with well-being, the tutor intentionally acknowledges the role of the supportive classroom (belonging) as a "community" (family and community). She listens (communication) and allows for mutual sharing (contribution). She may link them into community services (family and community). However, she allows for autonomy – they must initiate the approach, self-manage and act independently (empowerment).

Focus Group 2's Perspective on Well-being

The participants were asked to identify things that helped them to manage their lives (see figure 11). The list of factors that helped their well-being included taking time out and pausing to regroup their thoughts. This helped them to focus their energies in a productive way by providing perspective. They were using time to promote their well-being and to set goals. Developing patience was helpful to them. However, they also realised well-being could be achieved through greater integration as they accepted the past and moved on (holism). They also gained well-being through learning to learn (exploring topics), feeling connected (belonging), through trustworthy

friendships (relationships), and through appreciating their family (family and community). The single strand of well-being was supported by at least eight other parts of the weaving.

Figure 11. Lift factors in well-being.

Lift Factors in Well-Being

- Not blaming; Being open; Understanding behaviour
- Appreciating family
- Developing new friendships; Trust in relationships
- Taking time out; Individual rights; Goal setting
- Connecting; Belonging
- Self-respect; Tolerance
- Practising attitude changes; Tutor support and leadership
- Learning to learn
- Accepting the past and moving on
- Pausing to regroup thoughts
- Understanding others' life journey
- Identifying role models and why
- Patience

Whakamana – from Disempowerment to Empowerment

Tutor's Perspective of Empowerment

The tutor clearly understood issues of disempowerment. When they start the course, some students have little confidence in speaking. They are "very quiet or timid. They may put themselves down, and be very harsh on themselves. They feel what they say or do doesn't really matter, or have an impact." The tutor has clear strategies for dealing with empowerment, such as sharing in "rounds", practising skills, and getting and giving feedback. Most importantly there are "lots of opportunities to let them share their stories, their experiences, acknowledging the group's collective wisdom. Lots of affirmation, focusing on the positive."

The tutor uses enabling techniques to help the students gain a sense of authority and "voice". She finds ways to increase their mana, so they are not so self-debasing. She recognises factors that are disempowering such as timidity, lack of voice, diminishing one's capabilities,

and being harsh on oneself. To assist with empowerment, the tutor intentionally acknowledges the role of the group's collective wisdom (belonging) and encourages sharing in a variety of ways (contribution). They practise skills (communication). Sharing stories and experiences help with a sense of inner integration (holism). Affirmation provides a safe environment (well-being).

Focus Group 2's Perspective of Empowerment

I purposed to identify indicators of disempowerment and empowerment in the classroom, and methods to create "lift". This could be useful for educators. The responses were recorded in a chart (see figure 12 below). The minor/major lists show an emphatic differentiation between ideas on the nature of disempowerment and empowerment from "defeated" to "yahoo!". This mirrors the change experienced by other participants in previous courses. The list of factors included feeling free to make mistakes. Discovering inner strength and determination helped them tackle challenges. Being respected by others enabled them to gain mana. They were enabled to become relaxed, to achieve, to be strong, to be vocal, to be heard, to be confident, and to be free from negativity. They gained empowerment through group interaction (belonging), affirmation (well-being), and positive self-talk and assertiveness (communication). The single principle of empowerment was supported by at least five other parts of the weaving.

Figure 12. Matrix for empowerment.

Minor/Subdominant	Lift	Major/ Dominant
• Victimised, defeated	Okay to be wrong or imperfect	Calm
• Scared, daunted	Support to be assertive	Relaxed, relief
• Helpless,weak,tired	Understanding behaviours	Sense of achievement
• Apprehensive,	Developing skills	Strong, jubilation
• Nervous, anxious	Good group facilitation	Vocal
• Uncomfortable, uneasy	Acceptance	Confident in posture
• Confused, buzzing	Positive self-talk, feedback	Being listened to
• Challenged, avoiding	Affirmation	Secure, Comforting
• Frustrated, stressed	Respect, support of my children	Positive, feeling great
• Silent, blank, fuzzy	Inner Strength	Feeling taller
• Hinged shoulders	Determination	Looking happy, "yahoo"

Kotahitanga - from Fragmentation to Holistic Development

Tutor's Perspective on Holistic Learning

The tutor fosters holistic learning to cater for a diversity of backgrounds. She uses a range of activities and encourages students to teach each other. This creates an open and accepting environment for sharing cultural and spiritual backgrounds and beliefs. Students bring their knowledge, experience, and understanding to the group. There is no "one right way of doing things. It's pretty much in their hands."

There is an emphasis on the word "range" in the context of this conversation concerning holism. The tutor uses a range of learning activities, which respects individual learning styles and varied personalities. A range of cultural backgrounds and spiritual beliefs are acknowledged and accepted. A range of life experiences and capabilities are a source of knowledge within the classroom. Multiple perspectives and approaches are validated. The learning is student-directed. To assist with holism, the tutor intentionally encourages peer teaching (communication), an open and accepting environment (belonging), sharing backgrounds and beliefs (contribution), and encourages student autonomy by putting it "in their hands" (empowerment).

Focus Group 2's Perspective of Holistic Learning

The participants were asked to identify how the course developed their emotional and intellectual capacity, and how the diversity of learning activities catered for the range of learners in the class. The tutor's belief there was no one right way of learning is reflected in the participants' list. It is difficult to specify what activities help to create holism (see figure 13). Some were helped through written tasks, others through games or discussions, and others through applying the learning to real life situations. Thinking activities dealt with being reconciled to the past through the lifeline, reflecting on experiences through journaling, and gaining a range of different perspectives for considering issues. Feelings involved focusing on inner strengths, positive responses, a sense of uniqueness, and exploring deeply. The future seemed less fragmented. Holism reframes the past and projects positively into the future. All the different features of *Te Whāriki* are apparent – the skills of communication (more open communication), relationships (incident review report), exploration (looking at things more deeply), contribution (getting feedback to improve responses), role building in family and the

community (knowing how to deal with situations) as well as empowerment (talking about life positively), well-being (from fear to understanding strength) and belonging (increased group participation). The outcome of this is holism.

Figure 13. Thinking and feeling lift factors in holism.

Thinking Lift Factors	Feeling Lift Factors

• Shown different perspectives   Increased group participation
• Games, role playing, group exercies   From fear to understanding strength
• Lifeline assignment   More open communication
• Journaling   "Incident Review Reports"
• Reflecting on incidents   Knowing how to deal with situations
• Gaining tools and information to help   Getting feedback
• Group discussions   Talking about my life positively
• Reflecting on my learning   Looking at things more deeply
• Course reading   Understanding my uniqueness
• Improving concerntration   Feeling empowered
• Researching family history
• Improving incident [responses]
• Dealing with adrenalin surges

Mana Whenua - from Marginalisation to Belonging

Tutor's Perspective on Belonging

The tutor states her expectation from the start that they come together as a group or community to work together and finish together. "How they interact with that is up to them … they set their level of participation and disclosure. They're not judged for that. It means they are comfortable." The tutor engenders a sense of belonging through group interactions that create a peer dynamics. She constantly attends to fine-tuning the level of individual engagement, which is important in moving the class members from feeling isolated to becoming a part of the class community.

The tutor has expectations about membership in the class as a student. She provides a benchmark for mutual support from the beginning of the semester. This gives them a chance to

connect with the group and feel a part of the dynamic. This assumes their position as a valued member. A need for commitment is implied in the expectation that they will finish the course. Group interaction helps to consolidate a feeling of involvement and ownership over the learning process. However, the tutor also recognises that students may not choose to belong within the classroom. They may drop out, or they may show limited engagement as members of the group. To assist with belonging, the tutor intentionally allows for levels of comfort (well-being), positions the membership within a student "community" (family and community). She states expectations (communication) and allows for interaction (contribution). She seeks peer dynamics (relationships) and allows autonomy over the levels of participation (empowerment).

Focus Group 2's Perspective on Belonging

The participants were asked to identify words that express feelings of not belonging to the class and words that express their sense of being part of the group dynamic (see figure 14). The first list has a sense of alienation and isolation that some participants felt within the class as they engaged in challenging situations. They experienced social unease in some moments in the classroom with such statements as "everyone hates me", "nothing good to say", "silenced", "this is so uncomfortable". These statements represent some huge barriers to educational participation. This shows the importance of mana whenua and why the classroom needs to have a strong community basis. It helps to offset these powerful negative feelings through affirmation that moves them beyond unease into security and participation. The tutor provided opportunity for the students to settle into a participatory role within the class. Factors that helped them achieve a sense of belonging included "learning heaps" (exploration), achievement (empowerment), enjoyment of the group (relationships), participating (contributing), feeling affirmed (well-being), and secure (belonging), The single strand of belonging is supported by six other parts of the weaving.

Figure 14. Matrix for belonging.

Minor/Subdominant	Lift Factors

- Anxious, insecure, awkward — Achievement
- Didn't pair up easily — Enjoying the group
- I don't want to be here — Fun
- Unease, everyone hates me — Learning heaps
- Shyness, lost for words — Participating
- Embarrassed — Security
- Silenced, nothing good to say — Comfort
- Confused, why do I have to do this?
- Can't relate with others
- This is so uncomfortable
- I wish this would end
- How much longer?
- I don't want to talk about this here, now

Mana Aotūroa - from Inactivity and Passivity to Exploration

Tutor's Perspective on Topic Exploration

The tutor is aware students explore topics differently. Some seem to resist but even if they are not exploring a subject publicly, may be thinking about it privately. She does not judge their participation level on external evidence because a lot of the content is personal. "I trust they get what they need." If a student's behaviour detracts from the group, she will remind them that while the topic may not be of interest to them, it may interest others. She encourages deeper thinking around a topic through asking processing questions. For example, she may say: "how does this relate to you and your life?" The tutor gives activities where students explore beyond concepts to how things impact them in their life, and how to action ideas. When they practise their learning at home, it deepens their understanding of the topic.

The tutor recognises that students seek knowledge in different ways. She recognises the place for autonomy and lets them set their own level of personal or public learning (empowerment). There is a sense of holism in her statement "I trust they will get what they need". She encourages them to be aware of other students' needs (relationships) and asks

questions that enable reflective response (communication). They are given activities to perform (contribution). They practise skills at home (family and community).

Focus Group 2's Perspective on Topic Exploration

The participants were asked to think about topics they were reluctant to explore, and then to reflect on positive learning that resulted from their topic exploration (see figure 15). The participants faced fears and insecurities and moved beyond this into personal growth and knowledge. The tutor's trust in the students' own learning process – to get what they need – was evidenced in their list of their learning. The lift factors that helped their topic exploration included understanding principles and practising to perfect skills. They were also helped in their learning by feeling valued (well-being), facing up to things and growing as a result of the learning challenges (empowered), finding their learning enabled them to touch others with their lives (contribution), and realising others' struggles (relationships). The single strand of exploration was supported by at least seven other parts of the weaving.

Figure 15. Matrix for exploration.

Minor/Subdominant	Lift

- Reluctance — Feeling valued
- Intimidated — Facing up to things
- Scared — Understanding principles
- Too challenging — Realising challenges make you grow
- Others will think I'm stupid — Touching others with your life
- Feel I can't do it — Practising to perfect skills
- Frozen — Realising others were struggling more
- Don't want to do the course

Mana Reo - from Silenced Discourse to Communication

Tutor's Perspective on Communication

The tutor spoke of providing "interactive stuff" which she defined as primarily small group discussions where students reflect on how the material relates to their lives. In these groups, they practice newly learned ways of communicating, such as standing, slowing down their breathing, and speaking slowly. Games help to highlight how they communicate.

If an activity "backfires" with emotions becoming high, the tutor observes closely. If they seem unable to calm things down, the tutor pauses the game and reflects back to them what she sees happening and the roles played. She suggests other ways to address the situation, and then restarts the game. Afterwards, they debriefed concerning their experience. "Huge learning comes from this [game] about how different things trigger different people into unhelpful behaviour…. However, if they really aren't getting something I will just move on and approach the topic from another angle."

The tutor accommodates a range of communication styles and works on student application of practical skills firstly in the classroom environment and then at home. She recognises the role of reflection, feedback and debriefing as a means of improving interpersonal communication. She uses role plays for constructively analysing emotional reactions. She uses small groups (belonging) and discussions that foster interactive reflection (contribution). They practise communication skills and the role plays highlight how they relate to others (relationships). The games are a learning experience, but if they do not serve the purpose effectively, the tutor approaches the topic a different way (exploration). She uses challenging ways to provoke the students to reflect on how they communicate with others. She is obviously skilled in her ability to manage heightened emotions. Her activities meet her learning objective and if she feels the need, she adjusts the activities accordingly.

Focus Group 2's Perspective on Communication

The participants were asked to name those with whom they were more effectively communicating as a result of the course, the place where they were more effectively communicating and the specific tools that assisted their communication (see figure 16). The

Incident Review Worksheet relates to assessing assertive communication within a specific scenario. Conflict resolution concerns skills for dealing with communication breakdowns and provides methods for maintaining healthy relationships. Participants applied their learning firstly in small group interactions within the classroom (belonging) and then outside the classroom in a variety of social contexts. Talking in groups indicates the sharing and contribution that occurred through peer support. The list of people who have benefitted from the classroom learning shows that the communication principles are highly transferrable to a range of contexts (family and community). The range of places where the communication skills are used and the variety of tools the students are using to help them communicate more effectively indicates that the course content is achieving its purpose. Factors that helped their communication included an understanding of the relationship roles of rescuer, victim and persecutor in the Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968). The Johari Window (Luft and Ingham, 1955) relates to the whole self (holism) consciously known and visible to others but also the hidden self unknown and unseen. The single strand of communication was supported by at least six other parts of the weaving.

Figure 16. Matrix for communication.

Person Benefititng	Place Benefitting	Lift Factors
• Husband, partner	Home	Eye contact
• Children	Playcentre	Drama Triangle
• Mother, sister, dad	Class	Johari Window
• Family	Work	Scenarios
• Estranged family	Funeral	Focusing on the outcomes
• Tutor	Telephone	Talking in groups
• Friends	Email	Incident Review Sheet
• Employer, workmates	Community Centre	Turn taking in communication
• Peers, classmates	Supermarket	Miminising conflict
• Everyone	Outside contacts/agencies	Finding connections with people

Mana Tangata - from Withdrawal to Contribution

Tutor's Perspective on Classroom Contribution

When asked what methods she uses to engage those who are not contributing to the class dynamic or group, the tutor replied that sometimes students do "just sit back and coast along in the group. That's the ebb and flow of energy." If it's not common, she will ask them direct questions, such as "what do you think about that?" If they were not contributing at all, she would have a private conversation with them. "It doesn't seem to happen. There's peer pressure in doing interactive stuff."

The tutor recognises the energy dynamic involved in contribution. However, she also knows that interactive activities create a dynamic of peer pressure that lends itself naturally to involvement. She uses questioning to draw out reluctant class contributors. She has a strategy planned that if normal class contribution is not occurring, she will talk with them one on one to find out the reason. However, she has said this is not necessary. To assist with contribution within the classroom, she uses the group dynamic (belonging). She seeks to empower the silent by giving them the authority to speak within the class (empowerment) but also provides them with the right to be silent. There is a holistic approach, realising that students do have "an ebb and flow" of energy. However, she is also sensitive to their well-being, aware that some may require extra individual attention to communicate issues with her privately. Her reference to "peer pressure" shows her awareness of the power of relationships to draw forth natural support, giving and contribution to others in the class (relationships).

Focus Group 2's Perspective on Classroom Contribution

Figure 17. Lift factors for contribution.

Lift Factors for Contributing in Class

- Doing homework; being on time for class; taking part in all activities; giving out pens
- Playing class role games; group work
- Discussing; asking questions; sharing personal stories; giving and accepting viewpoints, affirming others, clarifying meaning
- Advising
- Friendship; respecting others; empathy; appreciation
- Laughter; humour; smiling - providing warmth and cheerfulness
- Offering support
- Driving a friend to class; keeping everyone on track; giving feedback ; bringing something to contribute from the homework; sharing experiences and ideas; passing information on to an absent classmember
- Relating to people you would not normally connect with; looking at body language.

The participants were asked how they contributed to the course (see figure 17). They cited a variety of ways, such as completing academic tasks, being involved in group activities, and cultivating relationships. They were active students, doing the tasks the course required. They responded to the tutor by offering support. They sought to help their peers. They found a variety of ways to contribute, emphasising the collective nature of learning in the course. This is reinforced by the value the students placed on the communication tasks in the course such as discussions (communication) and the relationships that emerged such as offering transport to a friend (relationships). There was warmth and mutual support which played an important role in deepening these relationships. The range of ideas can alert a tutor or teacher that simple gestures such as handing out pens, smiling, clarifying, or showing friendship to others may be ways that students believe they are contributing to the class dynamic. The tutor allows for an "ebb and flow" in contribution levels, which removes pressure to always contribute in class. Most of the contribution is intangible, but can be translated from the classroom into other contexts. Factors

that helped them included group work (belonging) and exploring topics through role play (exploration). Well-being is expressed through the concepts of warmth and cheerfulness (well-being). The single strand of contribution was supported by at least six other parts of the weaving.

Ngā Hononga - from Disengagement to Relationships

Tutor's Perspective on Relationships

Developing relationships is part of contribution and relies on the same process of teaching. The tutor explains how she deepens the process. She uses home groups for the students to "get to know each other on a deeper level. They consistently go back to that group for awhile to form relationships … [until] the task is completed". The tutor watches for the formation of "cliques … [people] feeling comfortable with those similar to them". She intervenes when relationship structures lose fluidity and positivity. Changing the groups, sharing successes, creating challenges and giving opportunities for disclosure are all part of this process.

The tutor uses the structure of home groups to establish strong relationships. She wants deep relationships to be formed, and yet not exclusive ones that shut out others in the class. She seeks diversity within the relationships, flexibility and relationships that help facilitate the classroom learning. The home groups create a sense of connection (belonging). She is also aware of well-being and watches to be sure that the students are "comfortable" in a way that is positive (well-being). The deep level of relationships she seeks indicates she wants unity and integration (holism). Creating challenges within the class relationships can bring personal empowerment to those who rise to the challenges (empowerment). Sharing successes is a way of generating group enrichment (contributions). Opportunities for disclosure provide further group interactions (communication).

Focus Group 2's Perspective of Relationships

Figure 18. Matrix for relationships.

Minor/Subdominant	Lift	Major/ Dominant

• Shy	Knowing classmates	Excited
• Anxious	Group bonding	Confident
• Worried	Understanding, learning	Optmistic
• Overwhelmed	Support; being able to share their life	Eager
• Frightened	Making friends	Cheerful
• Doubtful	Connecting with others	

The participants were asked to identify how they felt when they walked in the door of the classroom for the first time (minor/subdominant in figure 18 above), how they felt at the end of the course, three months later (major/dominant), and the reasons for the "lift". They suggested factors that helped positive relationships develop. At first, they wrestled with social anxieties, fears, doubts and worries. However, as they developed deeper connections with their classmates their emotions became positive. The processes are about relating, communicating, belonging – the outcomes are mainly about well-being. The tutor worked intentionally to enable all within the group to feel comfortable with each other. She was focused on the process. Factors that helped included knowing classmates and making friends. Connecting with others, support and group bonding were other factors (belonging). Understanding helped them with emotional uncertainty (well-being). Learning (topic exploration) and sharing their life (contribution) also helped with relationship building. The single principle of relationships was supported by at least six other parts of the weaving.

Whānau Tangata - from Bureaucracy and Institutionalism to Family and Community

Tutor's Perspective on Family and Community

Strengthening family and community relationships is another principle relevant to the *Identity and Communication* course. The tutor encourages students to identify areas they want to work on and invites them to consider how their learning impacts on their wider relationships. If something from the family or community is impacting the student's response in the classroom, often this emerges during personal sharing around the group. They will "often disclose stuff that

can sometimes give you a bit of a clue. Sometimes they'll state it clearly, but sometimes they'll just give little comments so you can tell."

The tutor encourages students to focus beyond the intrapersonal into the interpersonal arena of family and community where benefit is gained from this learning as they practise their skills in the home and workplace. There is a very clear connection between the individual as a student and her social context as a parent in the community. To assist with family and community relationships, the tutor has the student identity areas for improvement, which will foster well-being. However, the context is the "wider relationships" beyond the classroom. This suggests the tutor knows learning applied in the home and community has a greater chance of being retained in the long-term than learning confined to the classroom. Personal sharing (contribution) enables problematic scenarios at home to be brought to the fore. The group provides a sense of support that makes sharing possible (belonging). Opportunity for disclosure enables students to exchange information concerning family and community issues (communication). The tutor's role was to be careful and sensitive to social connections, proactively encouraging practical application in the home environment.

Focus Group 2's Perspective of Family and Community

The participants were asked questions that helped them to reflect on the process of developing roles in the family and community. They particularly referred to communication skills and feeling empowered (interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences). There was also awareness, self-acceptance, using 'I' statements which is about who I am, what is my role, my rights, my place to speak. There was support with transitions, such as the loss of a mother. The list of factors that helped family and community roles included integration of the past with the present, areas to improve, and goals to direct the future (holism). They gained well-being through overcoming fears and accepting comfortable roles. Standing up for themselves was enabling in these wider relationships (empowerment). Learning assertive statements was helpful both at home and in the community (communication). They learned to handle conflict positively (relationships). The single principle of family and community was supported by at least seven other parts of the weaving.

Figure 19. Lift factors for family and community.

Family Lift Factors	Community/Work Lift Factors
• "Helped with the passing away of mum"	Clearer on what I want for my life, what to improve
• Better communication skills	Learning to say "no" and meaning it
• Changing the way I speak	Accepting comfortable roles rather than "ones that would create overload"
• Not taking things personally	Handling conflict positively
• Understanding barriers in communication	Standing up for myself
• Awareness of what I say	Saying things in a better way
• Self-awareness	Understanding reaction to criticism
• Communicating feelings better	Using "I" statements; reflecting on the past
• Encouragement from the group	Choosing which battles to fight Overcoming fears and challenges Setting boundaries; self-acceptance

       To conclude, the students were asked to confirm the community development model: gaps the tertiary-High School partnership fills, community needs the course meets, course content that helps the community, and who it could benefit. Their responses showed awareness of the community context in which the course was situated. They felt that Massey High School was a "comfortable, familiar" environment; Unitec was unfamiliar. The *Identity and Communication* course "helps parents get back into study" and the workforce, especially "parents who are too scared to formally go to Unitec/Varsity". It is "a great start back into education" and as a free course "gets people excited about learning again – funding is often too hard for people". The course meets a need for interaction and friendship in the community, creating a "stronger and more supportive community". New leaders could emerge from the course, giving direction in the community. The course provides community skills, resources to "help broken families", and preparation to help others. The course could benefit families, senior high school students going into the workforce, and employees/employers.

Feedback from a Class Evaluation of the Course at Massey High 2nd Semester 2009

At the conclusion of the course at Massey High, eleven students gave evaluation feedback as further data that confirms these themes. Using a Likert scale, students evaluated both the teaching methods and the contents of the course, resulting in a 4.9 mean rating for both. (Five indicates "excellent value".) Doug said spoke of relationships when he said: "Our tutor modelled what *Identity and Communication* is…Life changing." Sarah spoke of well-being when she said: "I came into this course with a lack of self-esteem, self-confidence and am happy to say I leave with … skills that I can turn into practice." Pare spoke of empowerment when she said: "I felt empowered after sharing my life line with my group… It helped me move on in my life." Malia spoke of belonging when she said: "I can't wait until I facilitate a group meeting to test out my new skills."

Likert Scale Findings

Participants answered the Likert Scale questions at the conclusion of the interviews and focus groups. I created a graph (see figure 20) from the 18 participants' data from all three courses, which represents nearly half the total students completing the courses.

The figures in brackets below are the percentage agreement with each statement (categories 4 and 5). For example, 89% felt the course made a "significant difference with my children", 87% with their work and 80% with their partner. Again this confirms the transferability of the skills practised on the course into the wider environment. Despite many participants expressing a dislike of the Unitec environment, only 41% felt the high school venue was an important part of their decision to do the course. The fact 50% felt their children were likely to be more positively disposed towards tertiary education, gives strong support to one of the goals of the course.

Figure 20. Likert Scale Responses.
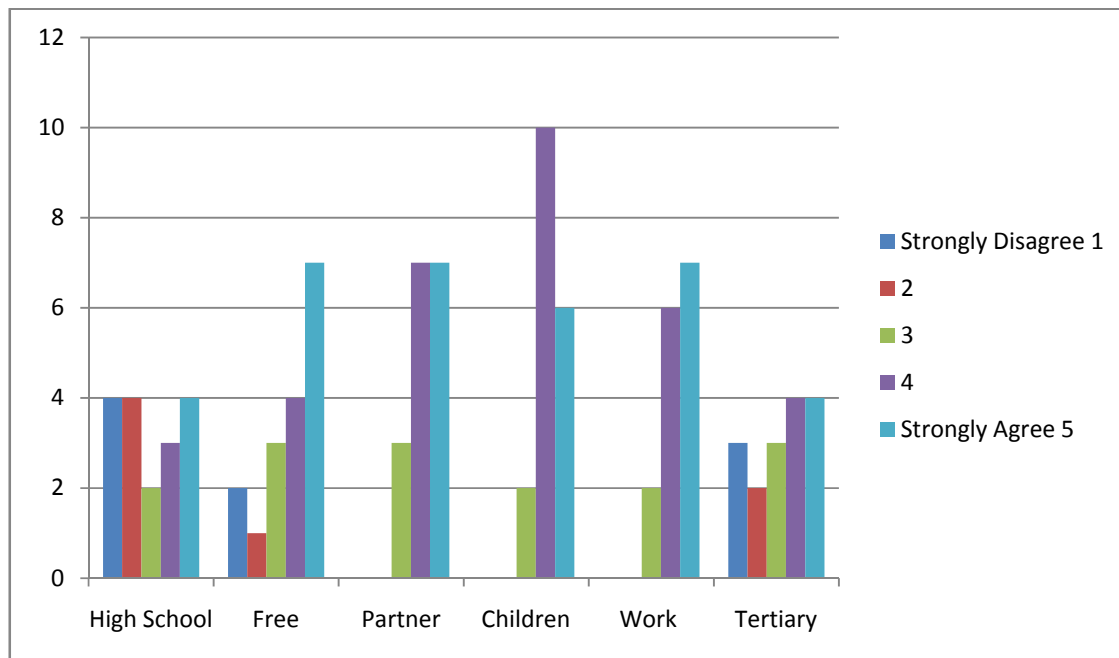
In Figure 20 the categories on the X axis refer to the follow statements:

1. "I did the course only because it was at the local high school." (41% agreed)
2. "I did the course only because it was free." (65% agreed)
3. "The course made a significant difference to my communication with my partner." (82% agreed)
4. "The course made a significant difference to my communication with my children." (89% agreed)
5. "The course helped me in how I relate at work." (87% agreed)
6. "The course has positively influenced my children's opinions of tertiary education." (50% agreed)

It is clear from these findings that the foundational ideas in *Te Whāriki* are not age-specific, but universal because they derive from interpersonal and intrapersonal principles. Hence, it is relevant in tertiary education, to Māori and Pacific Island learners, New Zealand Europeans and across varied age brackets. Unfortunately, many New Zealanders have missed out on this foundational knowledge. Having completed the synthesis and analysis of the findings from three classes of students I return in the next chapter to the original questions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
DISCUSSION

This study suggests that the achievement of students and the capabilities they gain are linked to a pedagogical framework derived from a community bicultural model. I have already discussed community development - and bicultural models of education including a pedagogical framework. This section seeks to look at what was achieved through the course content as the students moved from a subdominant (minor) to a dominant (major) social position in certain areas of their lives.

Participants gained empowerment through grappling with content that challenged their accepted identities or limiting and disempowering discourses. The support in the class enabled transformative actions to occur.

Participants gained communication skills. Those in the first focus group spoke of becoming more objective in identifying and solving communication issues. Several referred to a new awareness of "roadblocks" to communication (Bolton, 2003). The course gave the participants a new vocabulary to express identity and communication concepts, such as "victim's role" and "the drama triangle" (Karpman, 1968). They used assertive communication as they took ownership of their rights and responsibilities. McClure (2003) compares assertiveness with passive and aggressive stances. Some spoke of practising assertive communication skills in the home or around fellow students. As a result, they eliminated weak, apologetic language and self-blame when things that went wrong (McClure, 2003). Instead, they used "I" statements that owned behaviour, but did not blame others. They practised interacting with others using this new way of communicating.

Participants gained a greater sense of contribution. They identified "baggage" - a metaphor that describes a person's background that influences group dynamics. "Baggage" includes patterns of behaviour, ideas, beliefs, cultures and fears (Hunter, Bailey and Taylor, 1995). For example, they spoke of confronting baggage in group work and in gaining confidence in leadership roles.

Participants gained better and calmer ways of relating with others, including family members. Participants talked to children, partners and friends about what they were learning.

Their high engagement in the course content generated interest around them. They applied the teaching to specific situations that occurred in the home, community or at school, as such how the drama triangle (Karpman, 1968) could relate to teenage conflicts. Family members noticed changes as the students applied their learning to their environments.

Participants gained holism through the self-reflection involved in the lifeline assignment. It brought things to the surface which enabled the participants to examine them. They considered things that were significant to them, their strengths, role models and life themes (Unitec, *Identity and Communication Students Workbook One)*. They found out how to tell their life stories to others, confirming who they were and what they had accomplished. The telling of their life story to others in the class perhaps paved the way to enable them to connect with my narrative methodology as a means of data collection. When I asked for stories, they had already participated in a self-reflexive recounting of their life.

Participants gained a sense of well-being through heightened self-awareness, including understanding who they were as an individual and recognising their own potential. Barrow's (1982) work on self-esteem, self-love and self-confidence informs part of the course emphasis on identity and communication. Some found new aspects of being true to themselves, who they perceived themselves to be, and not being afraid of revealing themselves. This included seeing oneself as valuable. Journal writing became a way to remember the course content and to increase personal awareness.

Participants gained an ability to explore personal goals. This prompted changes of direction such as pursuing education, career and long term plans. Being around others in a supportive environment encouraged them to take on new challenges including travel. For some, the challenge was to make allocations in their time for study such as by declining invitations for coffee.

Participants gained a sense of belonging and community through cultivating new relationships and developing acceptance of each other. They learned how to connect with others through such things as learning deeper levels of tolerance in their relationships. They became more aware of others' needs as they gained community skills. They had an increased interest in working with people and talked about further training in youth work or counselling.

Links to the Literature

The results indicated the teacher's values were foundational to the success of the students achieving the Level Four course. This prompted me to consider the values of teachers who inspire students to succeed. It related to Glasser's (1992) choice theory characterising values that lead to success in the classroom: a sense of belonging, fun, freedom and power. There was also a sense of the tutor valuing the students' needs of safety, belonging, respect and self-esteem that corresponded to Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on the value of the student and their mana or self-esteem being protected (Bishop and Berryman, 2006).

Clearly the content was also a factor in the success of the students achieving the Level Four course. The emphasis on emotional intelligence (Gardner, 1993) addressed interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers to learning (Sun, 2008).

A student mentioned the concept of a "lift". The gaps of disadvantage in tertiary achievement were effectively addressed through the strong foundational structure. As a result, the course participants' learning was transformational (Freire, 1998) – they spoke of changes in family and community relationships.

Within the zone of proximal development of the support system of the class, students practised skills which they later translated into their everyday world (Vygotsky, 1978). The structure and system of learning allowed students to re-examine their personal identities and explore alternative ways of seeing themselves.

As a consequence of the research, I believe the principles in *Te Whāriki* are foundational to a healthy society and have links to other health models shown in the Health Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999). The bicultural nature of *Te Whāriki* fulfils the requirements of our Treaty partnership in its recognition of Tāngata Whenua. Empowerment (whakamana) as a foundation produces capable and confident members of society, whose sense of self-worth is strong with awareness of talents and abilities (Ministry of Education, 1996). They are able to reach their potential and utilise these talents successfully (Maslow, 1968). I have shown in the literature review and through the data how this foundation enables this "lift".

Holistic development (kotahitanga) acknowledges a spiritual foundation, promotes cultural awareness, and fosters identity (Ministry of Education, 1996). Bronfenbrenner's (2005d) ecological model resonates with this multi-layered social context of learning. *Te Whāriki* acknowledges the multi-level interplay of environments on the life of the child: the whare, the kura, the marae, and the iwi. The ecological system acknowledges both the individual (psychological) and the social system (environmental) (Bronfenbrenner, 2005e). In considering holism in education, I have deliberately placed it in both a psychological and social context. It is another important factor in enabling "lift".

Family and community (whānau tangata) are inherent to the foundational principle of interlinking networks in the neighbourhood (Ministry of Education, 1996). A community development model of capacity building recognises that strong partnerships create agency. Ife (2002) links community development with social networks, long-term viability, inclusiveness and balance – at all levels. This concept of building local capacity at the grassroots level is associated with social theorists such as Freire (Ife and Tesoriero, 2006). I have examined community disadvantage to seek possible solutions in this study. I have found that families and communities are a rich resources and places of synergy.

Relationships (ngā hononga) provide foundational support for learning where individual needs are recognized (Ministry of Education, 1996). I have shown relationships with peers and the teacher are pivotal to a positive educational experience, where mana is respected and self-esteem is nurtured. Educational growth occurs within the context of positive relationships.

Links to the Findings

The focus groups and interviews elicited rich data that was supported through triangulation. In depth interviews and a focus group confirmed the strength of the two courses. The positive outcomes were congruent with the initiators and developers of the course who intended increasing social awareness, interpersonal skills, confidence, and clarity of purpose. The findings confirmed that the participants developed the personal, social, academic and practical skills and knowledge they needed to be effective in their work and life. They were more confident as individuals and as parents, better communicators in the workplace, better role models for tertiary study, and had a high likelihood of continuing to study. A third source of data

was a whole class focus group that reinforced these outcomes and demonstrated the relevance of the *Te Whāriki* model in a tertiary context. This data was triangulated with student feedback during class evaluation sessions which showed that the themes of the in depth studies were common to the total group of students who had undertaken the Identity and Communication course. The Likert assessments for the three courses gave the same average score of 4.9 out of a possible 5.0 – an extremely high and consistent score, confirming the strength of the student appraisal and appreciation of the course. The interview with the tutor demonstrates the outcomes were the consequence of reflective thought and action concerning effective pedagogy, with an alignment with educational principles and values. The data possessed both depth and breadth, and was both qualitative and quantitative. In addition, it represented a wide mixture of cultures and ages. While women definitely benefitted from the course, not enough men attempted it to generalise about them. There is also the question of how a different tutor would fare. These areas suggest further areas of research; however, the justification for continuing with this model of community building and tertiary engagement is strong. Most overcame barriers to reengage with formal education. It is reasonable to conclude the Identity and Communication course is a valuable tool for community partnership in areas where tertiary participation is low.

Conclusion

This thesis contains principles that empower parents in education and in family and community relationships. It provides opportunity to listen to those who are not in dominant positions in society and to build policy based on research that highlights what really makes a difference to achievement in education. Government documents are being developed on the Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan (Ministry of Education, 2009). This research may be quite timely in hearing parent voices and learning positive ways to enhance family relationships while also building parental self-esteem. I am convinced these lift factors are vital for societal and educational change. We must work intentionally to build healthy communities.

The idea of the "lift" is the central motif. This research shows ways to lift the educationally disadvantaged into a position of well-being. The potential of a community can be fulfilled through local synergy, and through applying foundational principles that work for all members of society. This "lift" allows individuals and communities to move into the groove of developing innate personal potential. This "lift" is the role of community development workers,

social workers, counsellors and teachers. It is the role of parents, whānau and schools. It is the role of the curriculum. It is the role of educational and social policy.

> *The fourth, the fifth,*
>
> *the minor fall, the major lift.*
>
> *It's through the cracks the light comes through* (Cohen, 1984).

Recommendations

- That a holistic pedagogical practise based on the foundational principles of *Te Whāriki* be adopted at all educational levels.
- That Level Four courses for parents such as the Unitec *Identity and Communication* course continued to be funded in local high schools to increase capabilities in the home and in the community.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A (i)

INFORMATION FORM: UNITEC TO HENDERSON HIGH

Te Pae Whanake
School of Community Development

U Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

Community Studies

Participation in a study of the Identity and Communication Course held at Henderson High School in Waitakere City.

2 July, 2009

Kia ora,

At the celebration dinner we talked about a study concerning the Unitec Community Skills course in Identity and Communication. We discussed Carol Walden's interest as a researcher in finding out what has changed for you and your whanau/family as a result of participating in the course. Carol now is ready to talk you, if that is possible, about your experiences of the course. By taking part in this research project you will be helping her and Unitec to understand the impact of the course on you generally,

Attached is an Information Sheet that explains what Carol wants to do. We would like to contact you by phone or email to see whether you are available for this research.

Please contact me at 8154321 x 5071 or gbridgman@unitec.ac.nz if you don't want to take part in the research. Otherwise do nothing and we will be in touch to arrange a focus group.

Thank you in anticipation of your participating with Carol's research.

Sincerely,

Geoff Bridgman PhD
Department of Social Practice
UNITEC
Private Bag 92025
Auckland , New Zealand

+64 9 8154321 x5071
email gbridgman@unitec.ac.nz

APPENDIX A (ii)

UNITEC TO MASSEY HIGH

Te Pae Whanake
School of Community Development

Community Studies

**Participation in a study of the Identity and Communication Course
held at Massey High School in Waitakere City.**

5 June, 2009

Kia ora Susan,

You have previously met Carol Walden in an introductory session to the Unitec Community Skills course. Carol is in her second year of a Master of Social Practice degree at Unitec. During this session in which you met Carol, we discussed her interest as a researcher in finding out what has changed for you and your whanau/family as a result of participating in the course. Carol now is ready to talk you, if that is possible, about your experiences of the course. By taking part in this research project you will be helping her and Unitec to understand the impact of the course on you generally,

Attached is an Information Sheet that explains what Carol wants to do. She would like to contact you by phone or email to see whether you still are available for this research.

Please contact me if at 8154321 x 5071 or gbridgman@unitec.ac.nz if you don't want to take part in the research. Otherwise do nothing and Carol will be in touch sometime next week.

Thank you in anticipation of your participating with Carol's research.

Sincerely,

Geoff Bridgman PhD
Department of Social Practice
UNITEC
Private Bag 92025
Auckland , New Zealand

+64 9 8154321 x5071
email gbridgman@unitec.ac.nz

APPENDIX A (iii)

UNITEC TO HENDERSON HIGH

Unitec NEW ZEALAND Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka	**Te Pae Whanake** **School of Community Development** **Community Studies**

Participation in a study of the Identity and Communication Course
held at Henderson High School in Waitakere City.

1 July, 2009

Kia ora

Congratulations on your recent completion of your Identity and Communication course at Henderson. We are excited at the enthusiasm with which students respond to this course when it is delivered in a community setting. We are interested in researching the effectiveness of the partnership between Unitec and local high schools in increasing participation in tertiary education. We are interested in finding out what has changed for you and your whanau/family as a result of participating in this course.

Carol Walden is a Master's research student who is currently researching the effectiveness of the Identity and Communications course with the first intake of students into the course at Massey High School. Carol would like to extend her research to the Henderson High School course.

Carol would like to organize a focus group or separate interviews with you and your classmates to discuss questions such as:
- what you consider were the best and worst features of the course;
- what you consider were positive changes for the whanau/family;
- the course's impact on further training and career goals.

At the upcoming celebration dinner on July 15th we would like to have an opportunity to talk a little more about the research and for Carol to be available to answer any questions that you might have about it.

If you are not able to come to the celebration dinner, but would like to find out more about the research, you can contact me at 815 4321 ext.5073 or ldavies2@unitec.ac.nz.

Thank you in anticipation of your participation in Carol's research.

Regards,

Linda Davies
Programme Director, Certificate in Community Skills
Department of Social Practice
UNITEC
Private Bag 92025
Auckland , New Zealand

APPENDIX A (iv)

GENERAL INFORMATION FROM RESEARCHER

Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

Information for course participants

Study of the Identity and Communication Course held at Henderson High School in Waitakere City.

My name is Carol Walden and I am a second year Master of Social Practice student at Unitec. Part of my degree programme involves a research paper on a subject of my choice. My research topic looks at the skills gained from a tertiary communication and identity course for the participants. I am interested in receiving some feedback from you about how you perceived any changes as a result of attending the course. I have the approval of the Department of Social Practice to carry out the research.

What I am doing
I want to discuss what has changed for you and your family/whānau as a result of participating in the course. I am interested in finding out to what extent attending and succeeding in such a course has positive impacts in the home, socially, at work, etc.

What it will mean for you
I want to organize focus groups with you and your classmates on the Identity and Communication course and discuss the following:
- what you consider were the best and worst features of the course;
- what you consider were positive changes for the whanau/family;
- the course's impact on further training and career goals.

I would like to meet in a group for approximately two hours. I will tape the discussion and will be transcribing it (typing the conversation out) later. All features that could identify you will be removed. There may be two other volunteers supporting me in conducting the focus group.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project prior to the focus group. I would also like to discuss with you at the focus group about whether you feel it would be beneficial to talk with any member of your whanau/family about how they felt about the course's impact.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only the researcher and two supervisors will have access to this information.

Please contact me if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor:

My supervisors are Linda Davies (815 4321 ext.5073 or ldavies2@unitec.ac.nz) and Geoff Bridgman (815 4321 ext 5071 or email gbridgman@unitec.ac.nz)

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-947
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 27 May 2009 to 27 May 2009. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX A (v)

CONSENT FORMS

Consent form for Course Participants

> **Tertiary and School Partnership in Waitakere City.**

I have been given and understood an explanation about this research project for the Master of Social Practice degree.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the focus group.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and her supervisors. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: .... Date: ....

Project Researcher: .... Date: ....

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009-947
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 27 May 2009 to 27 May 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX A (vi)

RESEARCH APPROVAL

Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

Faculty of Social & Health Sciences

Department of Social Practice

4 March 2009

Dear Carol

Thank you for submitting your research proposal *Tertiary and School Partnership to Improve Educational Outcomes in Waitakere City*.

The proposals committee of the Department of Social Practice has considered and approved your proposal. We have several *suggestions* which we would like you to consider and these are on the attached sheet. Please talk these over with your supervisors.

Your principal supervisor is Geoff Bridgman and your associate supervisor is Linda Davies.

Please be aware that ethical approval may be required for your research once you have finalised your proposal. To determine the need for ethics application and approval, we recommend that you read the Guidelines for Ethical Approval in the *Research* folder on the Blackboard site *Postgraduate Students Resources*, to identify any ethical issues that may arise. Discussion with your supervisors or the ethics committee (email: ethics@unitec.ac.nz) may also assist in this decision process. This will help determine the need, or otherwise, for a full application for ethical approval. Ethics applications and accompanying documents should be submitted as email attachments to the above address.

We wish you every success in completing your research project.

Yours sincerely,

cc:

Principal Supervisor:
Associate Supervisor:
Programme Director:
Programme Administrator:
Research Office: Lindsay Richdale (full approval letter only)
Postgraduate Academic Administrator: Cynthia Almeida (including a copy of
the proposal if fully approved)

APPENDIX B (i)

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP 1 - 1ST MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

- Tell me about the course. How did you feel about doing it?

- What were the best and worst features? What engaged you? If a friend asked you what the most difficult part of taking the course was, what would you tell them?

- What kind of comments did you receive from friends and family about your new role as a student?

- What one positive change can you name as a result of the course for yourself or for your family?

- Now you've gone this far in your study, where do you picture yourself going from here?

- What did the words "identity" and "communication" mean to you before the course and what do they mean to you now?

- Can you think of any way that you as a parent feel differently about the high school now that you've been there as a student? Before you started the course, what difference did you think it would make to your teen's feelings about high school if you went to study there on a regular basis and what was the real outcome?

- If you were talking to your teenager about options after finishing high school, what do you think you, your partner and your teen would be saying? Do you think this method is effective in encouraging families to gain further training and qualifications?

- Can you think about a highlight of the course that could be beneficial to others in the wider Massey or Waitakere City community? How can the course be improved?

APPENDIX B (ii)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR HENDERSON HIGH SCHOOL COURSE AND
LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS

Questions for course participants

1. How did you feel about doing the course at Henderson High? Was the fact that it was free make much difference to your decision to do the course? What changed for you as a result of attending the course, e.g. jobs, taking on new challenges, further study?
2. How did the study impact on your family? Think to the beginning of term 1 when the children may have been starting a new school year. How is your family working now? What is different in term 3 from term 1 as a result of the study?
3. Tell me about time management – e.g. household chores, your own journaling – how did you allocate time for it? Have you continued to journal? Is there something else you are doing for yourself as a result of the course? What do your children think about it?
4. The theme of being true to yourself – what did you take on board in terms of the learning that you found empowering as a person and as a parent? (valuing self, who you are, not afraid, I statements, apologetic behaviour)
5. What has been the result of this high school tertiary partnership for you and your family? Has it strengthened your position as a parent in modelling study; your relationship with your child's school; changed family attitudes/culture about tertiary?
6. How has the course helped you in your relationships (e.g. broadening friendships, accepting people, meeting new people, not being intimidated by others, compassion for people who are different from you in the community)? With your partner? With your children? In your job or community roles?

Rating Scale
1= strongly disagree
5= strongly agree

1. I did the course only because it was at Henderson High.
2. I did the course only because it was free.
3. The course has made a significant difference to my communication with my partner.
4. The course has made a significant difference to my communication with my children.
5. The course helped me in how I relate at work.
6. The course has positively influenced my children's opinions of tertiary education. My work is _____ (occupation).

APPENDIX B (iii)

QUESTIONS FOR WHĀNAU MEMBERS -EMAIL

- What did you notice when you partner/mother did the Identity and Communication course? What were some of the good things that resulted? What were some difficulties?
- How did you feel about your partner/mother doing it?
- How did they change as a partner/mother? Can you think of a positive change? Did you think there was a negative change?
- Do you think your partner/mother will do further study? Has it had any influence on the study habits or goals of other family/whanau members?
- From your point of view, how could the course be improved? Is it a practical way to get a tertiary qualification or certificate? Did you like some of the classes being held at the high school?

APPENDIX B (iv)

QUESTIONS FOR COURSE TUTOR

1. What things do you do in the class to empower the students and what is an indicator to you that they need empowering?
2. How do you seek to strengthen relationships in the class and what alerts you to the need to work on positive relationships?
3. Is there anything specific that you do to try to strengthen family/community connections? How can you tell if there is anything from the family or community that is feeding into what is happening in the classroom?
4. How have you tried to foster holistic learning – emotional, spiritual, social, cultural, intellectual etc to cater for the diversity of backgrounds?
5. What does the term "student well-being" mean to you in the class and what impact does student well-being have in relation to their own self-management and autonomy as learners?
6. How do you create a sense of belonging in the class and what difference does make to student participation?
7. If a student is not contributing to the group or class dynamics, what methods do you use to engage them?
8. How do you deal with resistance if the members of the class don't want to explore a topic? How do you encouraging deeper thinking around a topic?
9. In terms of a community development model, what is holistic about this partnership with a high school compared to a course located solely at a tertiary location or at night school? What kind of synergy comes from it?
10. The course itself has been going 28 years. Why is it so sustainable? What would help this partnership model to continue into the long term?
11. Do you find the course appeals to a diverse range of people or does it appeal more to one culture, one age bracket, one gender, or one type of parent, seeking one type of career? In other words, is it specialised course, with a specific appeal to certain people in the community?
12. How does an identity and communication course balance out a perceived gap or need in the community?

APPENDIX B (v)

QUESTIONS FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL

1. Tell me about the background to the Unitec *Identity and Communication* course being held at the High School. How did it come about and what were you hoping to accomplish through it?

2. By approaching the Social Practice/Community Skills Department of Unitec it suggests you feel that the link between education and social practice is important. What do you think that the field of social practice can offer educators working in New Zealand schools?

3. The course is about identity and communication. What are identity and communication issues that arise with the teens you work with in the school? What seems to be the biggest identity/communication hurdles for the parents? What correlation do you see between this topic and educational achievement in Waitakere City?

4. What do you think would be the hardest aspect for West Auckland high school teens in moving on to tertiary studies? What are barriers to learning for this socio-economic group? Can you comment on any observations you have made as a teacher on how parents who are engaged in tertiary study academically inspire their teens as role models?

5. What effect do you anticipate from Unitec's involvement at Massey High as a cooperative venture between two dominant educational institutions in West Auckland? Can you comment on what you would perceive as positive outcomes for this model of partnership?

APPENDIX B (vi)

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP 2 – 2nd MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

1. **Using a Y-chart in small groups, use a heading "lack of power", think of a time during this course that this applied, then use words to show what a lack of power feels like, sounds like and looks like to you, and then use a Y-chart with the heading "power" to show a time in the course what having power felt like, sounded like, and looked like to you. In a third Y-chart with a heading "How I got it" think of what you were feeling when someone was encouraging you to be empowered, what was being said to you, and what was happening.** What brought the change, what factors helped, what methods worked.

2. **Using the faces, put an X through all the faces that described how you felt when you walked in the door of the classroom for the first time. Put a circle around all the faces that describe how you feel now. Then think about** the baggage, personalities, issues you went through in relationships during this course, and then on the back of that piece of paper write down any words that you can think of that helped a sense of positive relationships to develop during the course.

3. **Using a Venn Diagram in one circle headed Family/whanau and the other Community, put into the family circle anything that the course did to help just the family; in the other circle anything the course did just to help you in your community/work/school roles, and in the middle anything it did to help both.**

4. **Use a flow diagram and write the word "mind" in the first one and underneath write words that show how the course catered to developing your thinking (e.g. lifeline, journaling, small group discussions); in the next one write the word "emotions" and write words that say how it helped you develop emotionally (e.g. assertive communication tasks; games that showed you roles you played); in the last write the word "diversity" and underneath write words that show the diversity of activities you did in class that catered to a variety of needs, personalities, learning styles, cultures.**

5. **Using a fishbone diagram, write the word well-being.** Then put self-management on one side and autonomy/independence on the other side. Put on the self-management side any words to do with how the course helped you better manage your own life (e.g goals, designating tasks, time management for journaling). On the other side put anything that shows how the course helped you become more autonomous (e.g rights, responsibilities, true to yourself, assertive, more present in groups).

6. **Use speech bubbles. When you didn't have a sense of belonging in the class what were you saying about participation (just a phrase)? When you had a sense of belonging what were you saying about participation?**

7. **Using the mind map technique and put in the middle contribution. Brain storm words to do with how you contributed, related to others, and operated as part of the class group (e.g. class discussions, shared lifeline, took part in games).**

8. **Using the merits-disadvantages diagram, think of a topic in class you didn't want to explore. In the negatives, write down words you felt. Then in the positives, what**

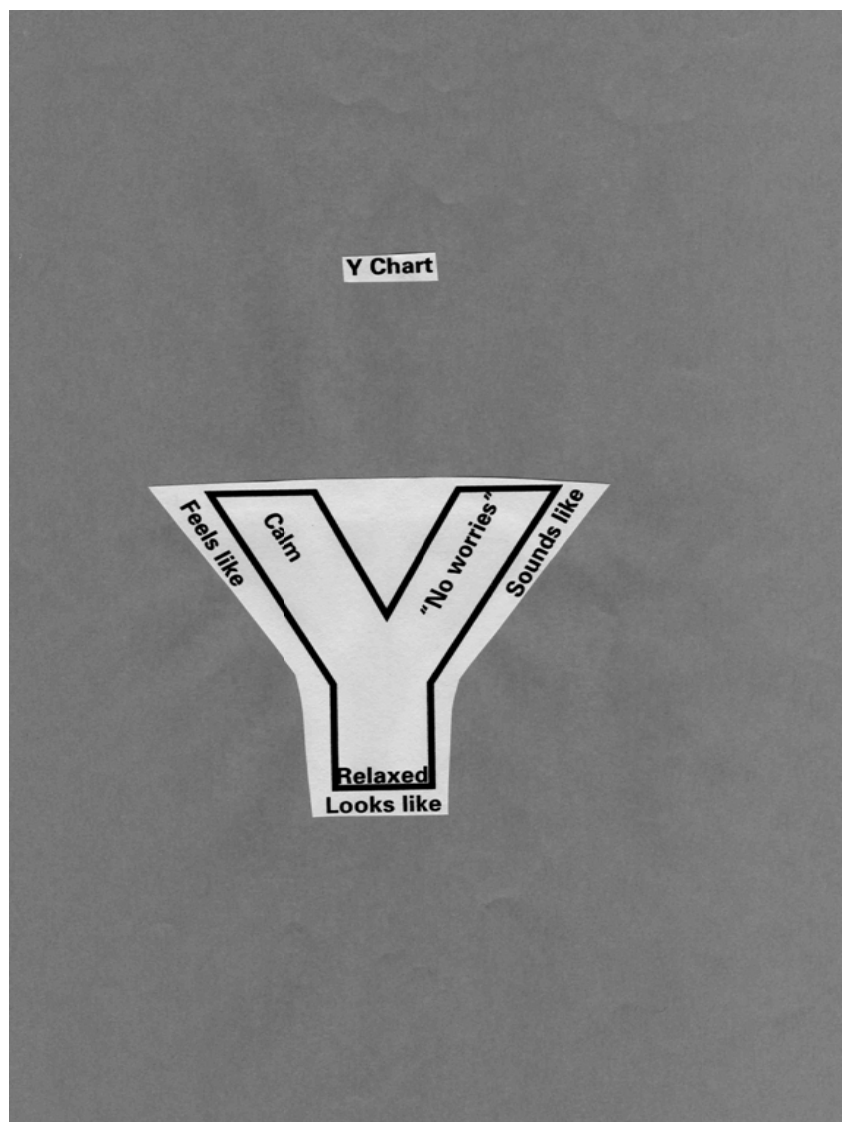thinking or learning came out of it. (e.g. lifeline – not done much, positive – done quite a bit)

9. Communication – headings who, what, where, how, why. who did this course help you communicate to more effectively? Where did you start communicating more effectively? How – what tools did you use that worked? What symbols, texts, or ideas helped you in your communication? (e.g. flipping the triangle, I statements, roadblocks).

10. The model of tertiary-high school partnerships in the community, parents learning community skills. Thinking hats: group one yellow (positive); group 2 green (creative); group 3 red (emotion)

What gaps does it fill?

What community needs does it meet?

What did you learn that helps the community?

How could we keep it going long term?
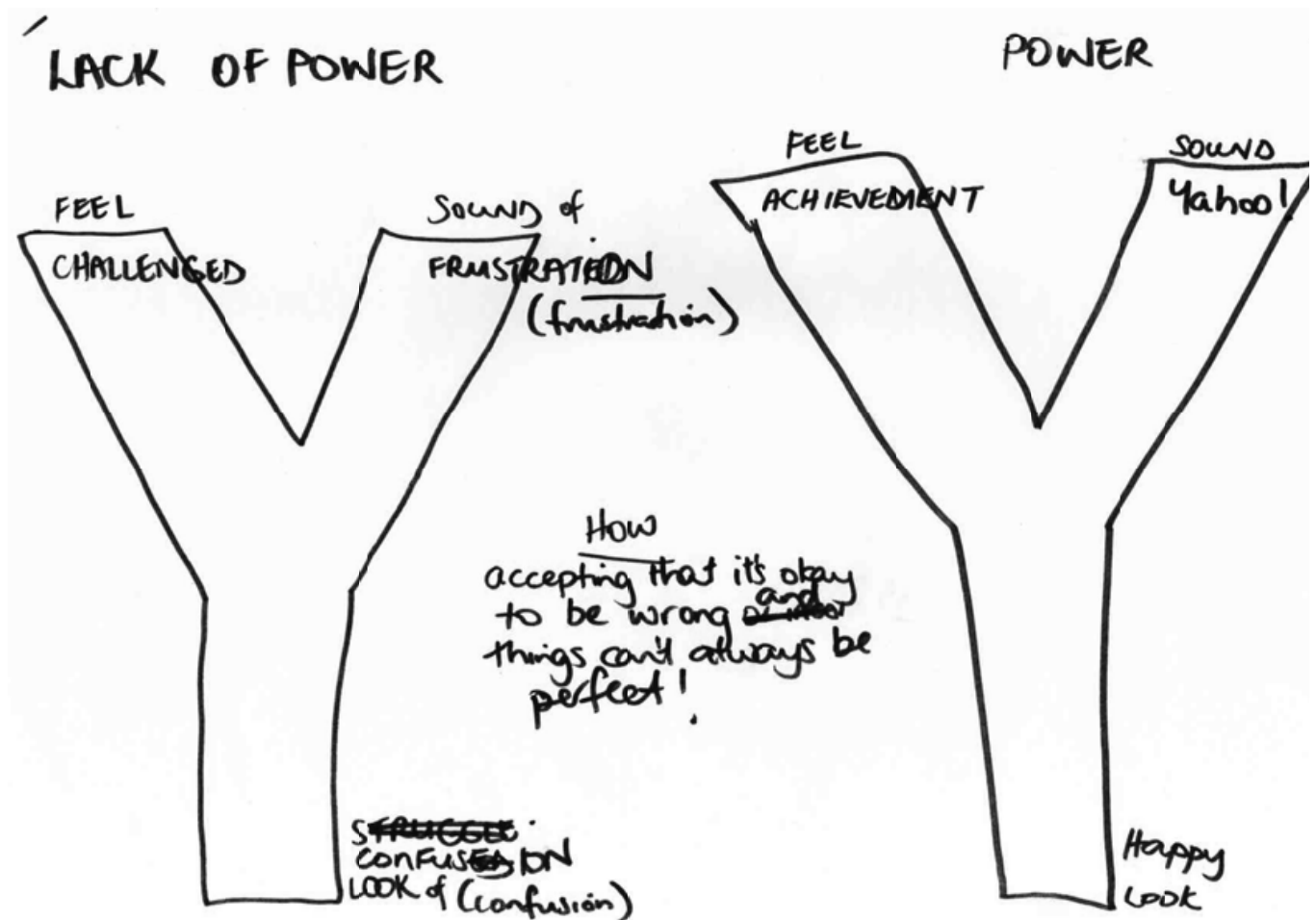
 Who could it benefit?

APPENDIX C

GRAPHIC ORGANISERS AND FINDINGS FOR FOCUS GROUP 2 – 2nd MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE
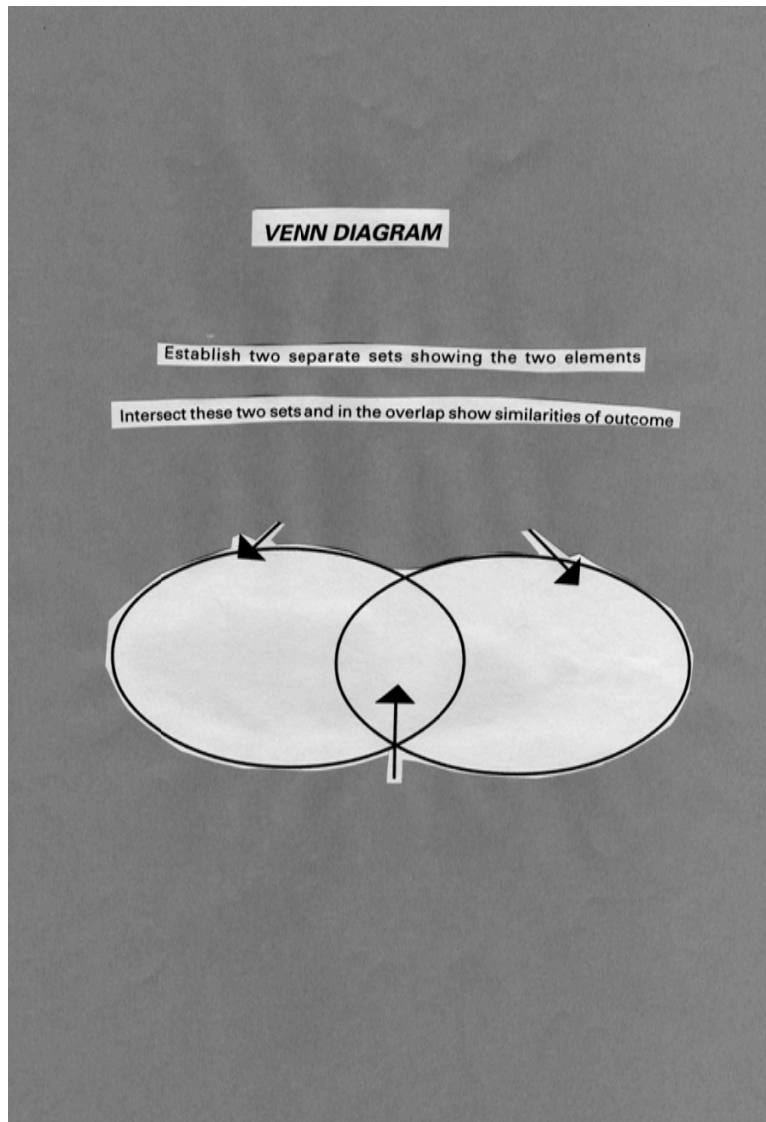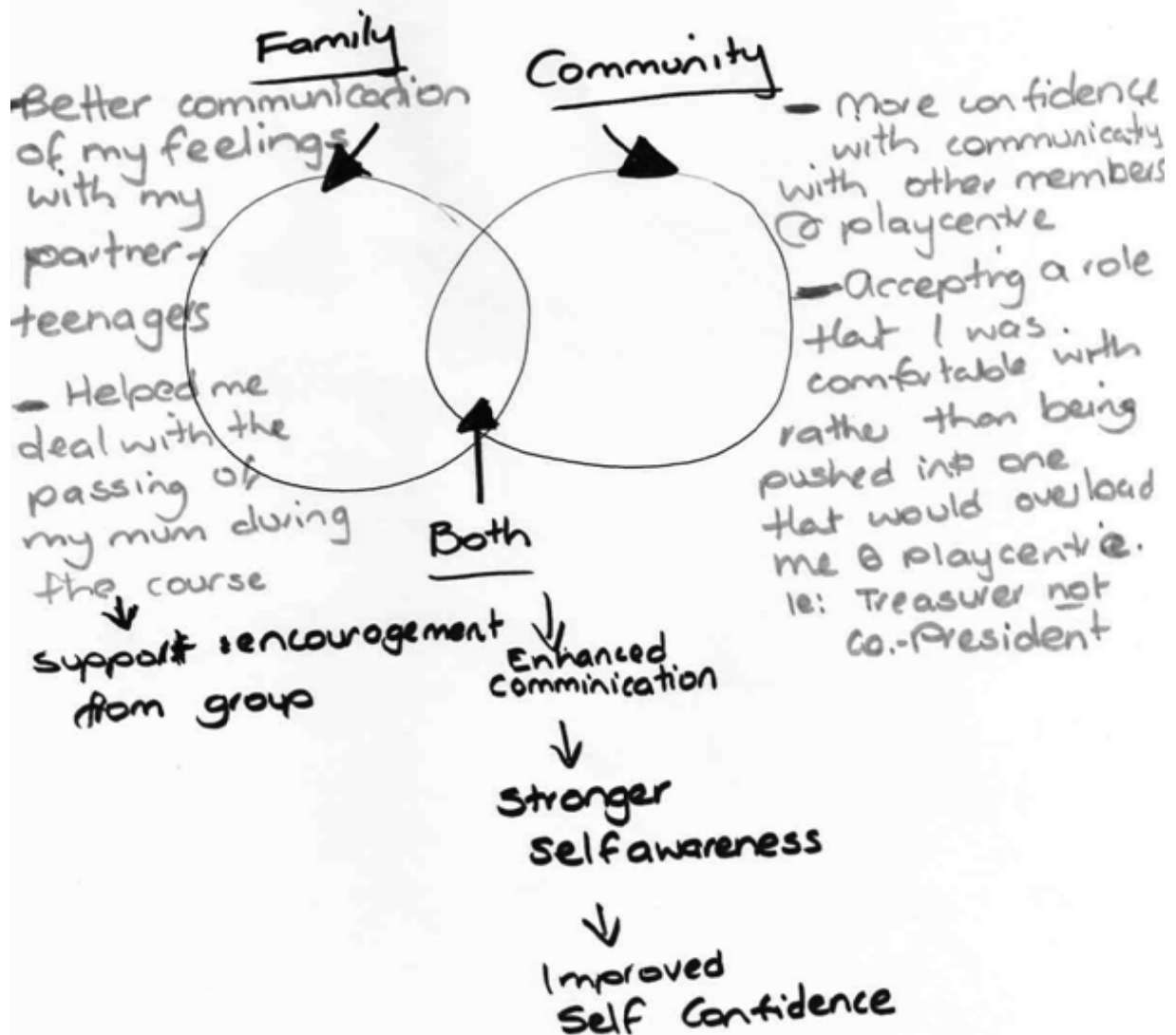
APPENDIX C (i)

Y CHART

Y Chart

Feels like

Calm

"No worries"

Sounds like

Relaxed

Looks like

Y CHART FINDINGS

LACK OF POWER

POWER

FEEL
CHALLENGED

SOUND of
FRUSTRATION
(frustration)

FEEL
ACHIEVEMENT

SOUND
Yahoo!

How
accepting that it's okay
to be wrong and
things can't always be
perfect!

STRUGGLE
CONFUSION
LOOK of (confusion)

Happy
Look

APPENDIX C (ii)

VENN DIAGRAM

VENN DIAGRAM

Establish two separate sets showing the two elements

Intersect these two sets and in the overlap show similarities of outcome

VENN DIAGRAM FINDINGS

How the course helped me:

Family   Community

Better communication of my feelings with my partner → teenagers

— More confidence with communicaty with other members @ playcentre

— Helped me deal with the passing of my mum during the course
↓

— Accepting a role that I was. comfortable with rather than being pushed into one that would overload me @ playcentre. ie: Treasurer not co.-President

Both
↑

support + encouragement from group

Enhanced comminication
↓

Stronger self awareness
↓

Improved Self Confidence

APPENDIX C (viii)

FLOW DIAGRAM

FLOW DIAGRAM FINDINGS

Thinking

mind

LIFELINE. reasearching family history — remembering the past

JOURNALING enabled me to reflect on learning + what to improve on

LISTENING TO OTHERS

Better concentration

Feeling

emotion

Speaking out Assertively

Speaking about feelings more assertively

more open communication with my partner - getting a more positive response

Incident Review Reports An excellent tool to reflect on an incident, how to deal with it or improve on future incidents

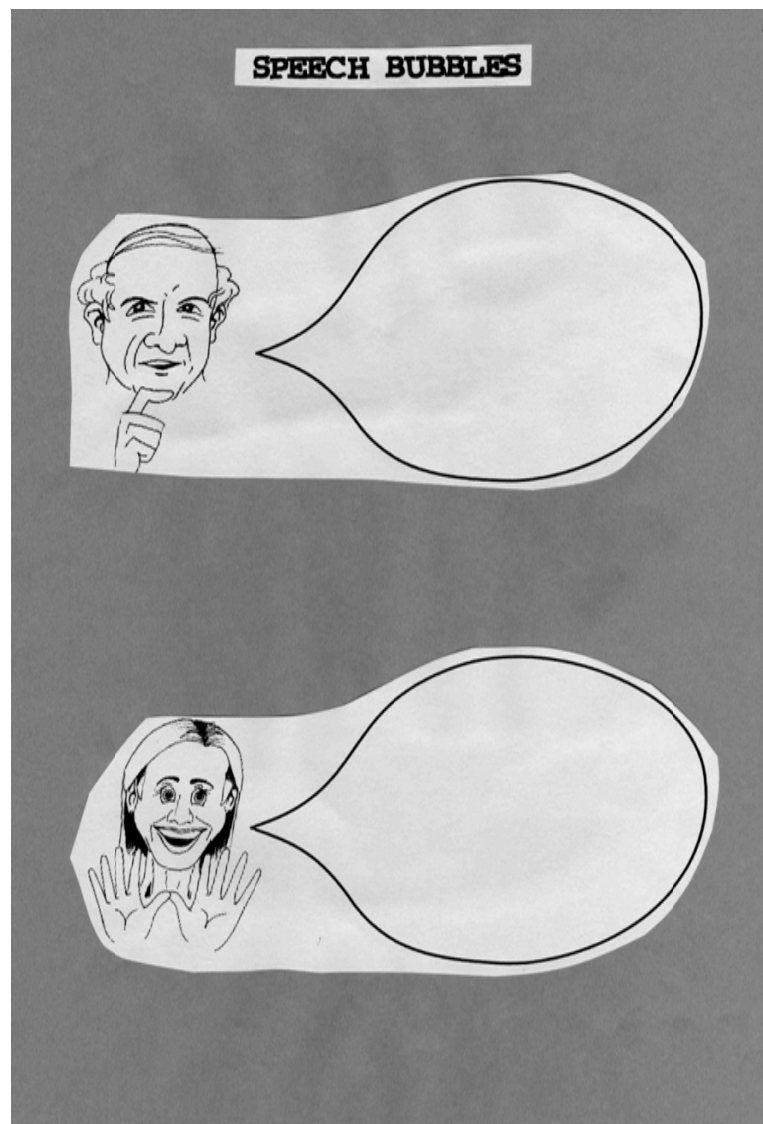**APPENDIX C (iv)**

FISHBONE DIAGRAM
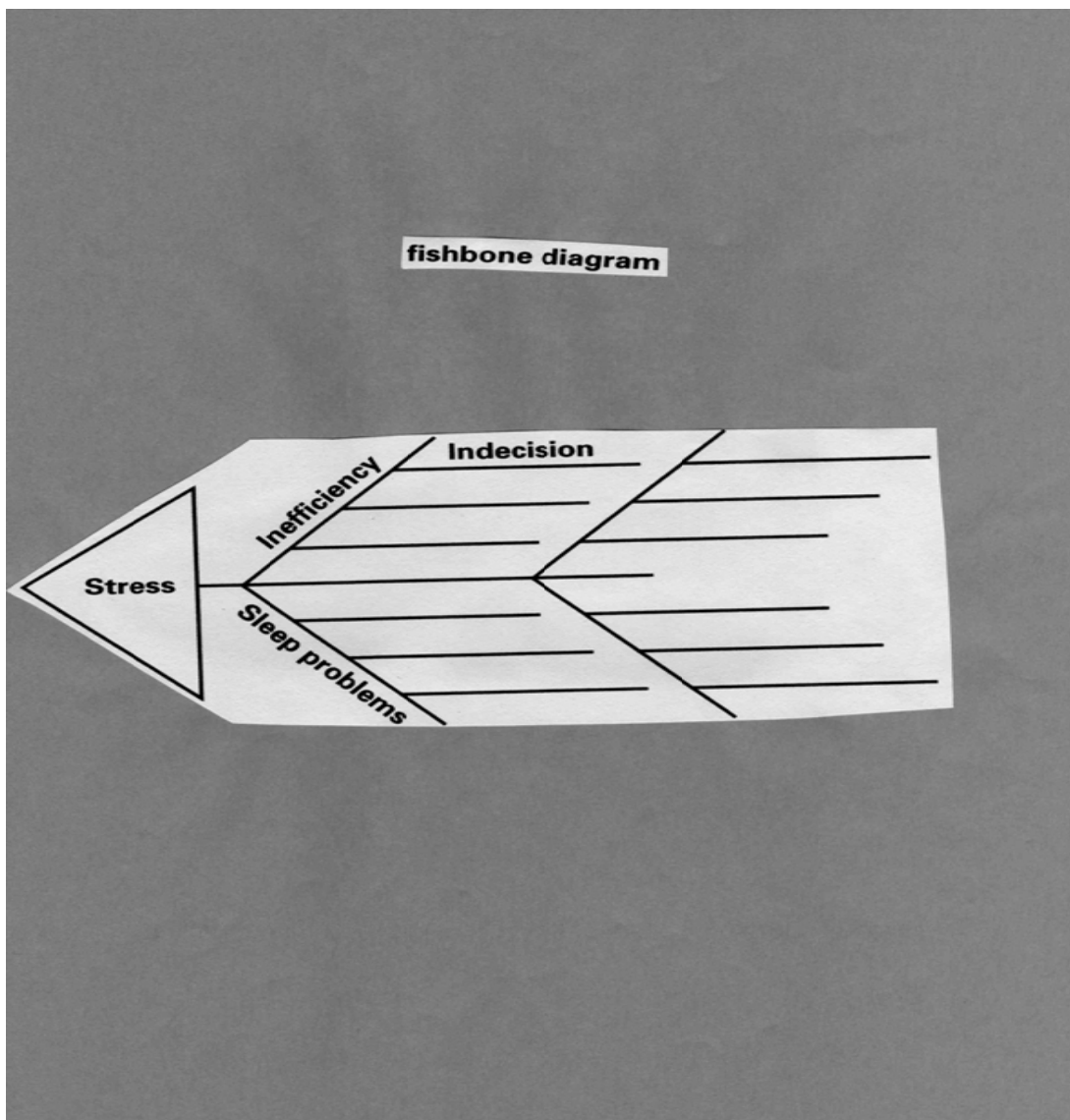
FISHBONE DIAGRAM FINDINGS
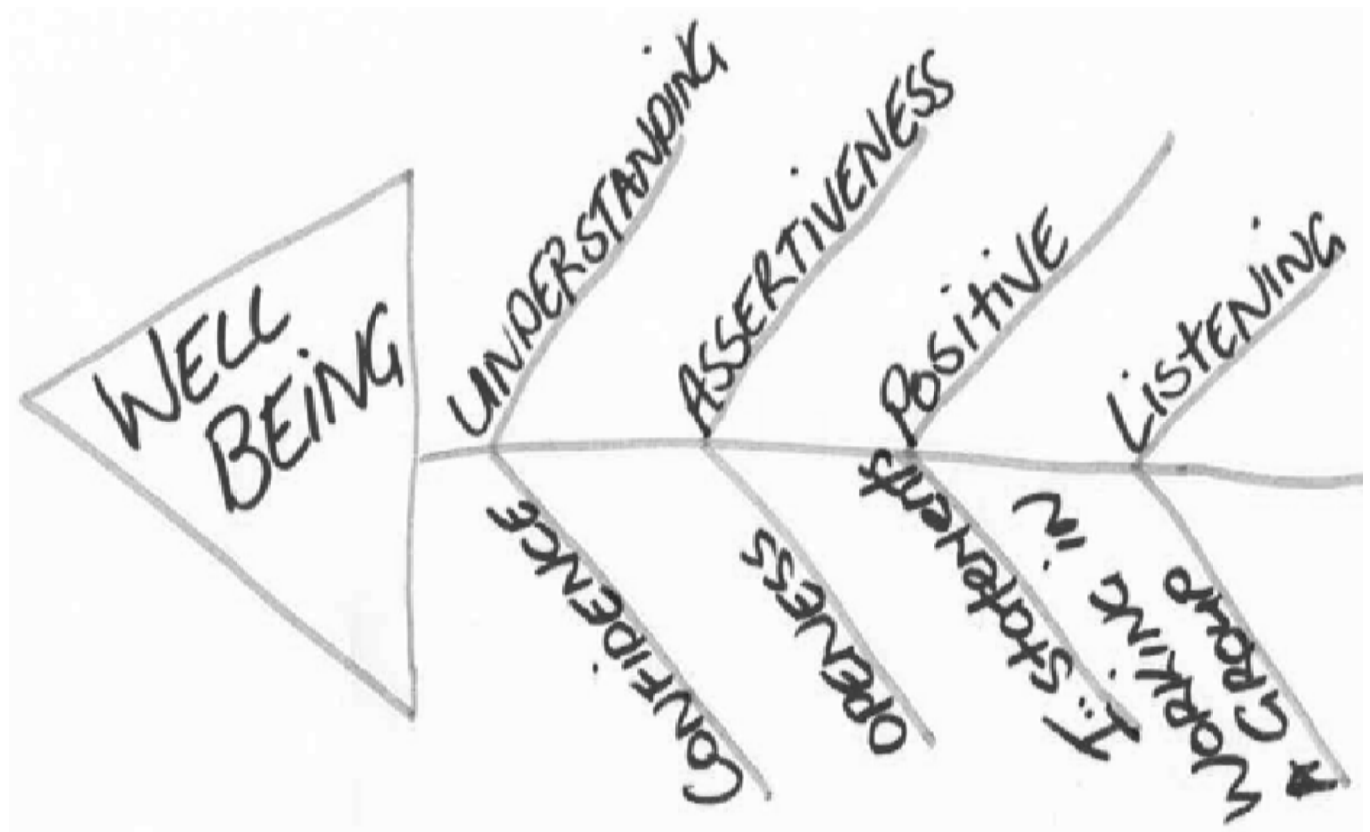
APPENDIX C (v)

SPEECH BUBBLES

SPEECH BUBBLES FINDINGS

BELONGING

Secure and felt like I had a purpose; comfortable

NOT BELONGING AWKWARD.
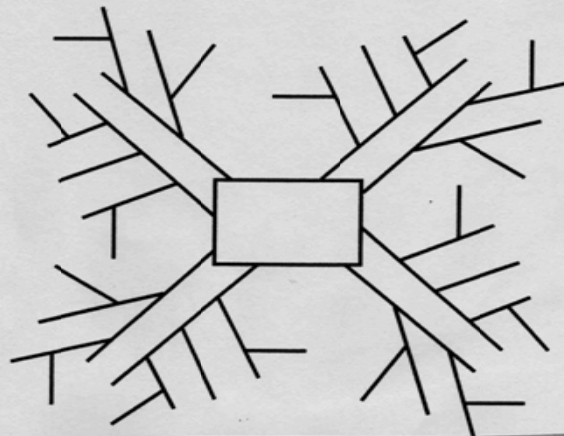
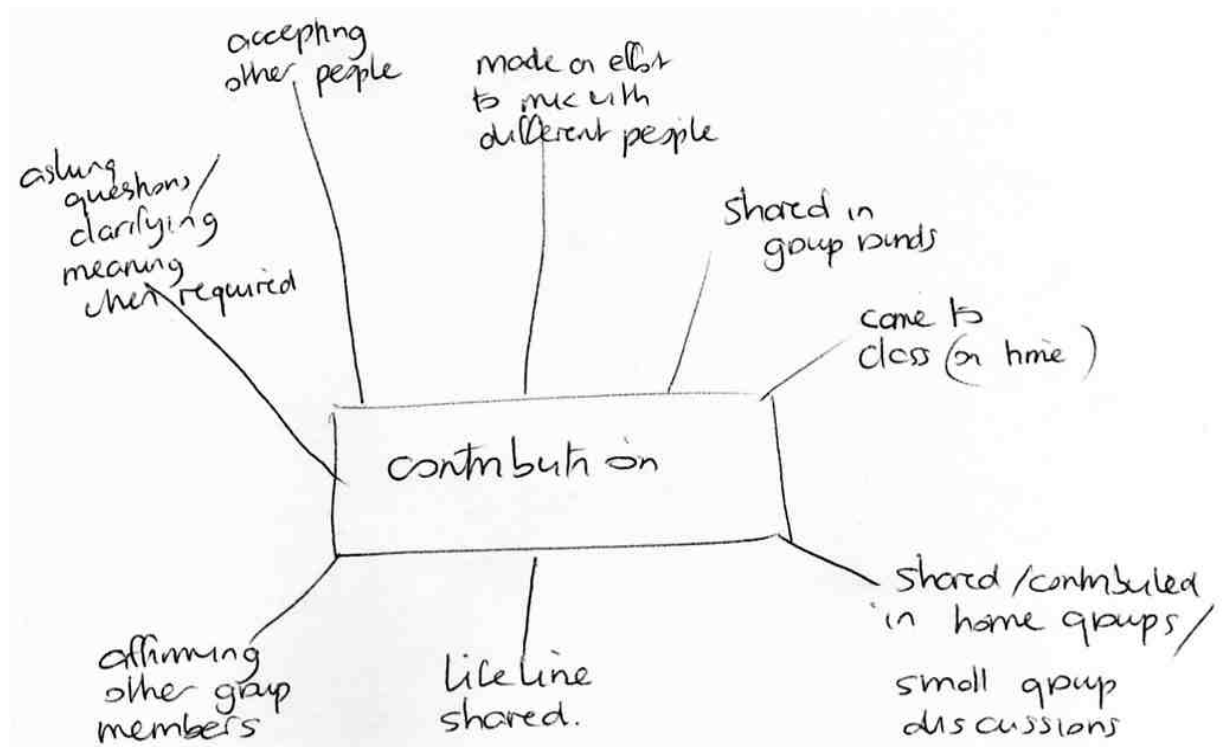Insecure; feel like everyone hates me, and I have nothing good to say.
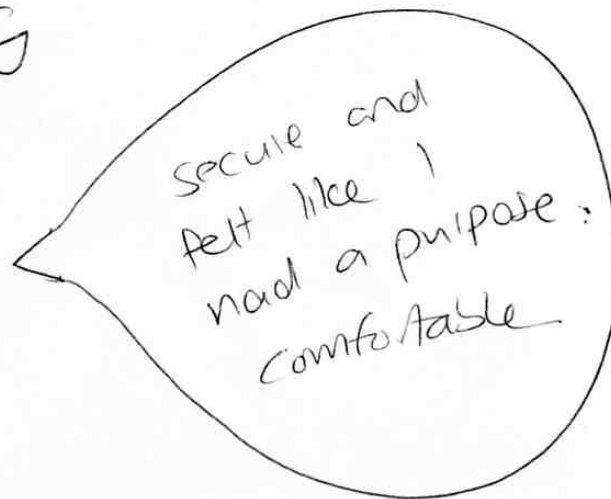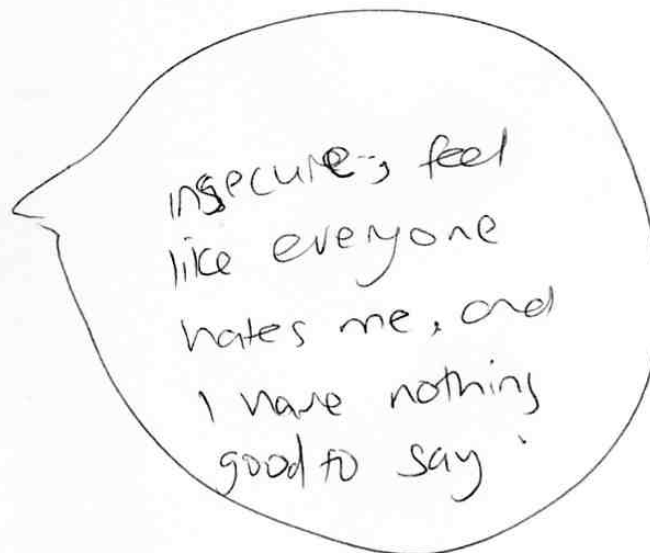
APPENDIX C (vi)

MIND MAP

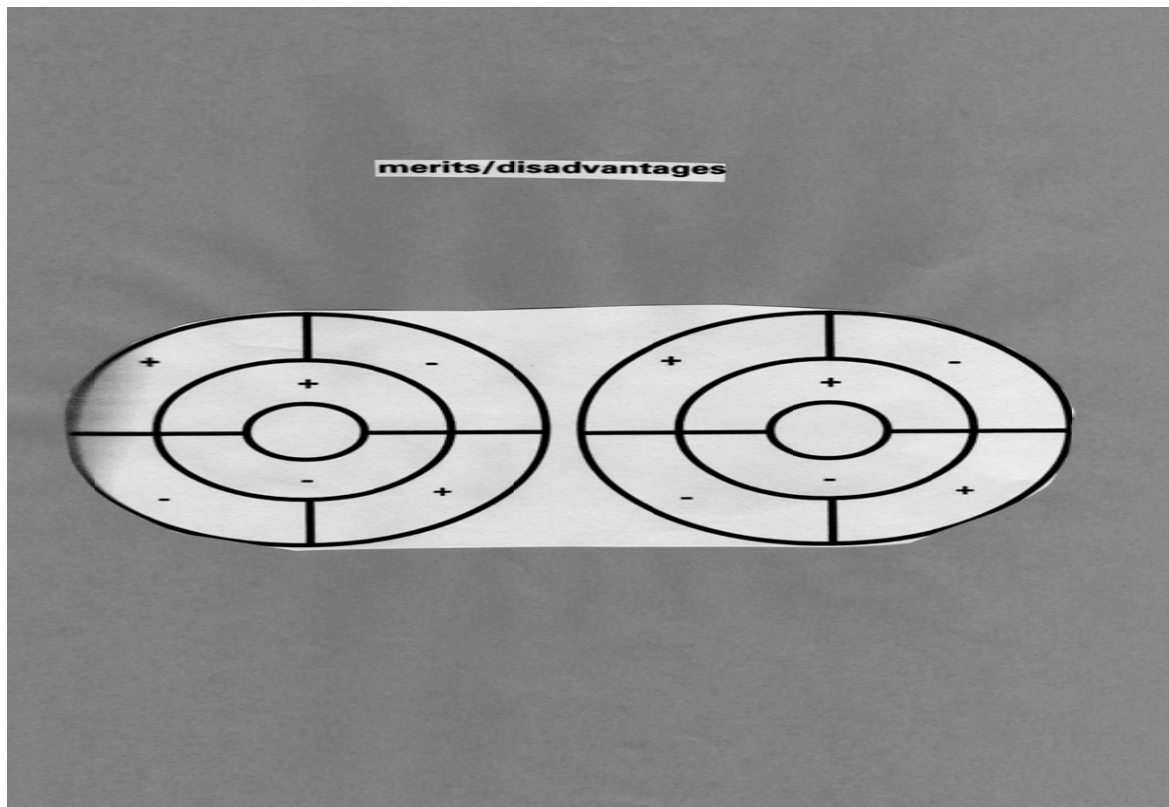Using a mind mapping technique each take turns to teach the other the main point of his/her material.

MIND MAP FINDINGS

accepting other people

made an effort to mix with different people

asking questions / clarifying meaning when required

shared in group binds

come to close (on time)

contribution

affirming other group members

Lifeline shared.

shared / contributed in home groups / small group discussions

APPENDIX C (vii)

MERITS and DISADVANTAGES

merits/disadvantages

MERITS and DISADVANTAGES FINDINGS

— having to talk for 20mins about myself Outloud. hard for me not a talker in groups.

It was hard but + I became stronger through it.

lifeline

— didn't want to share myself with anyone

I did it & made + it & touched others with my life.
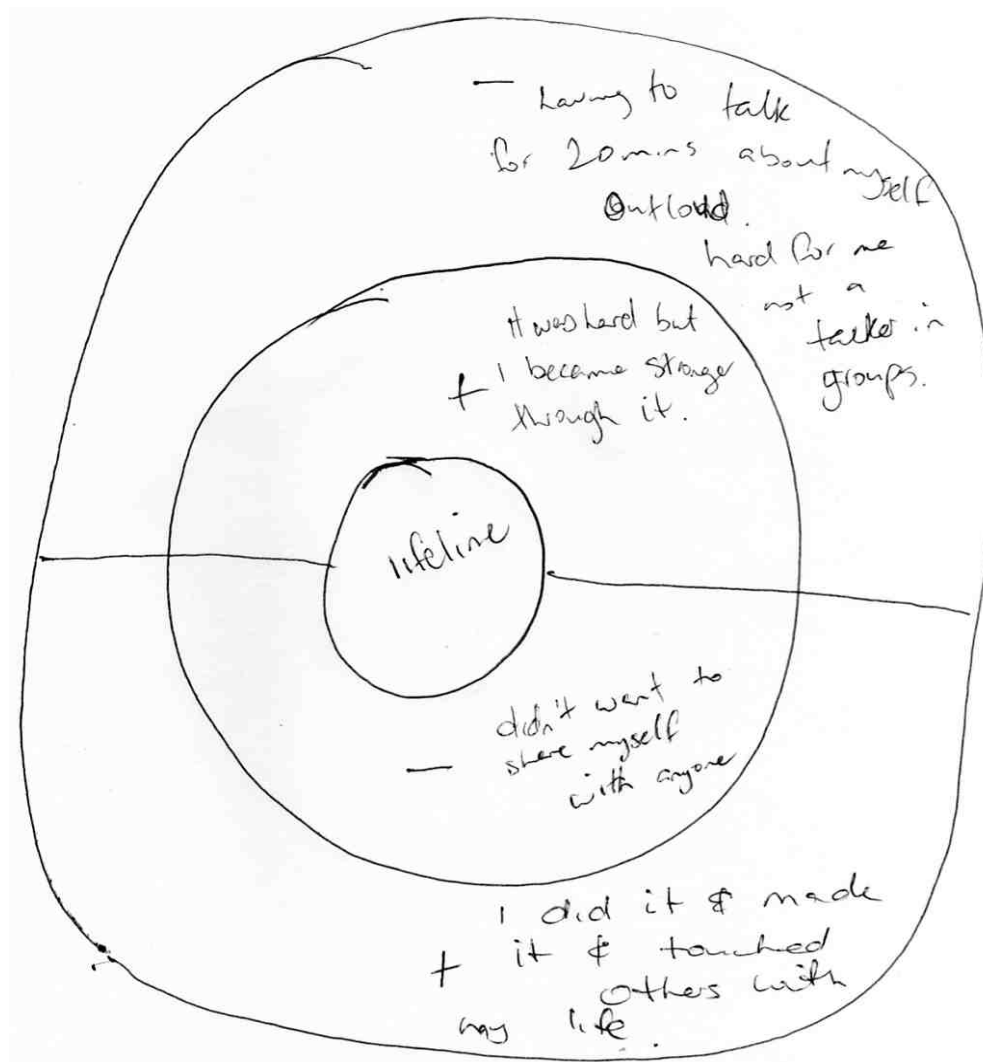
APPENDIX C (viii)

WHO, WHAT, WHERE CHART

WHO	WHAT	WHERE
To my tutor-teacher Kathy Because I Struggled through School as I couldn't understand my teachers	I Statements awareness Life lines	At home in groups in Class At the Supermarket