

**SUPPORTING YOUTH
FOR WORK IN NEW ZEALAND:
A CASE STUDY OF THE SAMOAN EXPERIENCE**

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Bruce Siumanaia Tasi: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

Pasifika people are a youthful population group. It is important therefore that Pasifika youth have opportunities to live fulfilling and satisfying lives where they can achieve their dreams, support themselves and their families and make valuable contributions to their local communities, their country and global communities now and in the future.

Government and local city councils have become more proactive in developing strategies that will assist young people to be part of an inclusive economy. One of the key areas identified, is the transitioning of low achieving and disengaged school leavers into further education, skills training or employment. Hence the government's and the councils' shared goals of implementing the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs in 2007, which is to ensure that all youth between 15–19 years of age are in employment, education, training or other activities that lead to their long-term economic independence and wellbeing (Ministry of Youth Development, 2004).

Transition courses provide bridging alternatives for youth transitioning from school to employment. They are designed to provide extra help for students who leave school with low or no qualifications. In some cases youth find themselves out of favour with mainstream education and have been forced to end secondary schooling prematurely. Transition learning gives youth a second chance at education by improving their employment marketability.

This research highlights the rich stories of Samoan male youths' transitional journeys. The study discusses the critical factors that have contributed either positively or negatively in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace. Eight Samoan male participants were involved in the study ranging from 18-21 years of age.

This research topic has evolved from the researcher's involvement in working with South Auckland Pasifika youth for over four years. Some of these youth have been traumatised by their school experiences and have had to face some enormous barriers when transitioning from school into the work place or further tertiary education.

After selecting the topic, research frameworks that would be most appropriate for the research were explored. The researcher shares similar cultural and personal experiences

to the participants. The framework for the study is therefore aligned to the values of the researcher. Accordingly, the multi-case study approach has been adopted, as such an approach has the potential to reveal what participants feel is significant. The interpretive paradigm underpins this research. The technique for gathering data was through semi-formal in-depth interviewing. During the interviews, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the effects that the transitional courses had on them as learners and as Samoan youth. This method of research is culturally appropriate, as it allowed the depth of voices of these young Samoan people to be heard.

The themes that have emerged from the findings reflect the broad categories of literature and research findings in the field of transition. The findings also provide new and insightful information about transitional experiences of Pasifika male youth. The research findings from this study focus on key aspects of programme implementation including; the teacher/student relationship, mentoring, student resiliency and the role of the government in youth transition. The research also evaluates the extent to which the transition course curriculum content supports student knowledge and skills in their current work situation.

All participants in the study were generally positive about the courses they attended. They discussed the positives in terms of good tutoring, high degree of team cohesion and relevant meaningful learning experiences. The participants cited the negatives as poor teaching, and the low level of some of the literacy and numeracy activities they were expected to complete. Overall they were far more positive about their transitional learning than they were with learning at secondary school. Most felt prepared for work.

The study proposes further research in the area of youth transition. Findings from this study will be disseminated to the appropriate government policy makers, city councils, youth services and tertiary providers through presentations at youth development conferences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale for the research

In comparison to the overall population of New Zealand, Pasifika people are a youthful population group. In the 2006 New Zealand Census the median age of the New Zealand population overall was 35.9 years. The median age for Pasifika Youth was 21.2 years. The average age of Samoan youth was 20.9 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). As Pasifika people are predominantly a youthful culture, they need to be provided with support networks during transition and early working years in order to make valuable contributions to their families, their communities and to the larger New Zealand community. In the 2006 Census it was reported that Pasifika men were most likely to be employed as labourers (23 percent), machinery operators and drivers (21 percent) and technicians and trades workers (20 percent). Pasifika male youth need to be better represented in higher paid employment otherwise the poverty cycle will continue to exist in their lives and their children's lives (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

The rationale for this research study therefore is to hear the voices of some of this youthful population and to explore with them what have been factors that have contributed either positively or negatively for them in the time of transitioning from school to work. It is important for these youth in the study and other Pasifika youth to prosper, for the health and well-being of New Zealand. The findings from this study will be disseminated to policy makers and educators to improve the quality of transition courses in order to enhance the learning experiences of Pasifika youth.

My research journey

My interest in this area began when I was a transitional broker for a local council's trust. I was based in three different schools, mentoring and assisting a large number of students who were transitioning into employment or further studies. Many of these young people were Samoan.

The thesis presented here is an extension of my interest in how youth survive their transitional journeys that begin their adult lives. The thesis also represents a significant and challenging personal journey causing reflection on my own past, one which is not too dissimilar to the early stage of the lives of the young Samoan male participants in this study.

As a young Samoan growing up in Samoa; living a traditional family life in a village in Vailima, my education, like my father's before me was influenced by colonisation; a traditional society being modernised and developed. Many development programmes happen in third world countries and colonial societies form a special category when analysing the modernisation process. The process of modernisation was rapid in many colonised countries due to the extreme force used by the colonising power. Most changes introduced by the colonial powers eroded the fabric of the traditional society (Smelser, 1996 as cited in Moon, 2004). To understand my life, as a Samoan male and a Samoan researcher and the lives of the participants in this research, there needs to be an understanding of Samoa's history and subsequent migration of our families from Samoa to New Zealand.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Treaty of Berlin split the Samoan Islands into two parts: American Samoa and Western Samoa. New Zealand troops landed in Upolu on 29 August 1914 and took control from the German authorities. Accordingly the islands became known as Western Samoa. In 1962 Western Samoa regained its independence (Holmes, 1987). My father told me stories of my ancestors belonging to the Mau movement, something of course I was very proud of, as this group worked peacefully to gain Samoan independence from colonial rule. Before this independence was regained however, colonisation was very costly for Samoan people.

My own education therefore was directly impacted by colonisation. I was born in 1962 the seventh of nine children. I was taught at a primary school by my parents. My father and mother were teachers, trained in Samoa. The pedagogy of teaching was based on western traditional models. I read books about cows that lived in red barns and nuclear families with two children. We read Janet and John books sent over from New Zealand, donated by the New Zealand government. Although we lived a semi-traditional life at home, all sleeping in the fale, following Samoan village rituals, our schooling was very much based on a western education system. We of course also went to church, and

although we spoke and sang in Samoan, the services reflected westernised Christianity. Colonisation directly affected my own cultural heritage as a Samoan.

In 1975 I was sent to New Zealand to attend secondary school at St. Paul's College in Ponsonby. With very little English, life was difficult, lessons were hard and I could only socialise with other Samoan boys. Despite my parents high expectations of me, I felt dumb and found it difficult to learn the language. There was no extra tuition for students whose first language was not English.

In 1978 I failed all my exams. I had made a decision that I was not going back to school or back to Samoa because I felt ashamed of my failings. I knew if I was made to go back to Samoa, my parents would have directed me to become a Samoan church minister, something they had planned for since I was at Primary school. I did not want to do this as I had aspirations to be a physical education teacher.

I was very concerned about bringing shame to my family and I had discussed this with my Samoan friends at school. I had heard of Pasifika peers who had killed themselves in similar circumstances. I did not want that to happen to me. I decided to run away and with support I got to Australia, where I became a street kid in Sydney. Fortunately for me I attached myself to a visiting New Zealand rugby team and toured New South Wales. At the conclusion of the tour I was offered opportunities to live, work as a gym instructor and play rugby in Orange City.

I returned to NZ in 1990 for family reasons. In Auckland I had a string of business ranging from health and fitness centres to nightclubs and restaurants, and in 1997 I decided to pursue tertiary studies. I had many managerial jobs in the health and fitness industry, but I had decided I could do much better and seriously further my career with a formal qualification. Although I was happy with my decision, I was extremely nervous. I completed and graduated with a Bachelor of Sports Management from UNITEC in 2003. Two years later, I enrolled in a Master of Arts degree in Youth Development at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

In this research of young Samoan youth, I do share some of their experiences both culturally and as a struggling young person. I therefore see my stance is that of the 'self' as described in Ladson-Billing's (2000) description of a researcher. I occupy the

position of insider 'emic' perspective – the insider's point of view (Marshall & Grossman, 1999). The self that is a migrant and the self that is a Samoan person who left school at 16 years of age, due to language difficulties, and a mainstream secondary education system that was not equipped to teach students like myself. It is disheartening to see that after 33 years, mainstream education and the education system on the whole, still has not found ways to engage the style of learning and perhaps the culture of learning for the very students who will make a huge contribution and difference to our future.

Boyd and McDowall (2004) reported that there is little data available on the career information guidance provided to 'at risk' students in lower decile schools, and on their transition experiences. A focus on successful transitions for low decile schools is needed, given that a high proportion of the students who are over represented in low decile schools – that are from Maori and Pasifika Nation backgrounds – are far more likely to leave school with no qualifications (Statistics New Zealand, 2001a).

How does quality of careers programmes in schools impact on a young person's ability to make good future choices? How genuine are the support services in assisting young people to make good decisions about their future careers? In my time as a youth transition broker I have observed variability in the quality of services provided both in schools and by support agencies. I therefore would like to attempt to find out from the participants their experiences of the support they have received during their transitional journeys. I am also keenly interested in how personal attributes such as resilience and self efficacy enable students to be able to have the stamina for sustainability.

As I came to write the conclusion for the research I reflected on the positives and negatives that influenced my life and the similarities of some of those experiences that the participants reflected on in their interviews. My life is bound up by being a son of teachers from a colonised country, a country that gained its independence, and a country which people are encouraged to leave to seek a better life. The participants are also a product of colonisation. Their grandfathers and fathers came as immigrants to a modernised society to work as unskilled labourers in South Auckland. Their families are still surviving and are part of the low income workers' group who keep a modern society going. The parents have dreams for their children to live a better and prosperous life.

All participants are proud to be Samoan and can speak the language. One participant talks about becoming a matai (chief), following in his father's footsteps. This in my mid-life is something I face. My family would like to bestow upon me a chief's title and matai status, as this would give us greater claim to our extended family heritage and land.

For me there was and still is a constant struggle in balancing my commitment to my extended family and my own nuclear family, where together we want to achieve goals. For my own survival when I was 16, I had to leave my family and go as far as Australia to break the family ties, but as I grew older a family member became sick, so I returned home to support my family. At this stage I was the most financial member of the family, and my resources were drained to support my aiga's fa'alavelave (extended family commitments). Participants in this study struggle with similar family commitments and it is evident in their talanoa (comments) that they too must walk a sacrificial path, all in the name of family, traditions and culture.

Team cohesion was extremely important to me. Playing rugby in Orange gave me the community I was looking for. Today these team members are still my closest friends. We supported each other through our teenage and early twenties. Team support has helped the participants in this study to keep on going, to be resilient to overcome some of the life barriers that they face. Mentors also played a vital role in my journey. The President of the Orange Rugby Union was my mentor. He acted as a second father to me, and mentored me through my twenties. The participants in the research discuss their mentors or the lack of them in their lives.

Participants viewed the health and well-being aspects of the course content as highly valuable. My survival in life and subsequent success as a personal trainer and dance teacher originated from the importance for me to keep myself fit, strong and healthy. It was primarily about survival on the streets of Sydney but subsequently provided openings and opportunities throughout my working life. While the story of my personal journey will continue well beyond this study, my reflections on my own life has highlighted for me the influences on the young Samoan youth in this study as being culturally and contextually bound.

Chapter overviews

The thesis is organised into several sections. The first chapter has presented the rationale for the research and my own research journey that shaped the present study. In the second chapter, I start with a review of the recent research literature pertaining to the concepts underpinning the study. In this chapter there is a review of both national and international literature in the field of youth development and transition.

In the third chapter, the methodology is presented. The theoretical position and the research context are explained. In addition the research context of the present study and participants are then introduced. Data collection, analysis methods and ethical considerations are then discussed.

The findings are presented in the fourth chapter with the participants' backgrounds being introduced. Then the common themes that have emerged from across participants' comments are outlined with support of substantial extracts from interview transcripts. Whilst the fourth chapter outlines the findings, these are discussed more fully in the fifth chapter. The discussion focuses on factors that either positively support or negatively hinder the participant's transitional journeys.

The sixth chapter contains a summary of the findings. The strengths and limitations of this research are discussed and the implications for this research are then proposed as recommendations. To conclude the chapter there is a final reflection and conclusion of the research thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In order for our world to prosper both spiritually and economically, young people need to be fully engaged in creative pursuits so they can make a positive impact on world development. In this review there will be a critical look at existing research in the field of youth development and youth transition and will indicate what has been done in these areas. The review will also identify whether or not there are gaps in the literature and what these might be.

In this literature review there will first be an in-depth look at who our youth are today. Youth today experience a different reality than youth in different periods of time. In recent decades in New Zealand, youth went from school to work or in some cases, particularly Pasifika youth, from school to unemployment. It is important then to view research into youth realities today. In recent years government policy has addressed youth transition by providing transitional pathways into work or further education. Current research on the positive and negative aspects of the transition pathway approach will be reviewed.

There will also be a review of the literature discussing the resiliency paradigm which is relatively new in youth research and how these findings regarding resiliency should or should not determine the course content of transition courses. Finally, an examination of literature relevant to the involvement of the state in youth development both nationally and internationally will be discussed to determine the extent of what is the duty of the state in ensuring youth transition positively into the next steps of their life journeys.

Who are our youth today?

As young adults prepare to leave school and move into the much awaited, yet highly misunderstood, world of work or tertiary education, these young people need to be supported. For a community to fully support its young adults there needs to be a

comprehensive understanding of who they are and the issues they face. Gordon (1991) states, “Young people are marked with an imperative to be ‘perpetually responsive’ for them to make what could be called ‘a continual enterprises’ of themselves” (as cited in Vaughan, 2003, p.2).

According to Wyn and Dwyer (1999), it is important to explore the navigation, the process of young people’s destination from school to work or further study. Young people on this journey today are facing increasingly unpredictable and more complex experiences. School to work transitions of the past, where life and society was lived out at a much slower pace, were more straight forward. Young people today therefore need to be more versatile, flexible and have more stamina.

Vaughan (1999), in her research discusses youth behaviour in this time of transition. She refers to a ‘milling and churning’ period (Vaughan, 1999), referring to a process of moving between a diverse set of activities, only one of which is work, before settling into permanent work. Vaughan reports that governments feel anxious about the ‘milling and churning’ period, whereas young people like it because it is experimental.

According to Vaughan (1999), governments need to rethink transition policies to take into account this ‘milling and churning’ period but also need to examine the concept of adulthood, or at least the ‘crossing’ over period from adolescence to adulthood. Youth today seem to take longer to grow through the adolescent stage. Vaughan believes transition policies do not necessarily mirror our current youth (Vaughan, 1999).

Pasifika youth identity

Pasifika youth in transition are also in a stage of establishing an identity as a Pasifika youth in New Zealand. Youth of Pasifika descent make up over 50% of the New Zealand Pasifika population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). In previous generations Pasifika populations were predominantly migrant whereas today the Pasifika population is predominantly New Zealand-born (Anae 1997).

Literature in the field of Pasifika communities explores ethnic and personal identity. The formation processes of contemporary Pasifika youth provide diverse interpretations of identity. Youth Pasifika identities are developing within global and diasporic

contexts. Pasifika youth in New Zealand seem to be appropriating and localising global cultures, to create their own self-identifications (Anae, 1997).

Identity is a multi-faceted construct and can no longer be defined as a static entity, product or process (Nayak, 2003). Researchers Fitzgerald (1993) and Hall (1992) agree with Nayak that postcolonial, post modern and diasporic identity is flexible, unlike in the past where identity is determined by family descent or place of birth. For diasporic communities the new local identities are poised in transition. Bi-racial, multi-racial and diasporas' identities tend to be transient and shifting in nature (as cited in Tupuola, 2006). Kerbs (1999) refers to the concept of edgewalking to define and interpret the transient and shifting roles of minority youth in the USA. In her view, an edgewalker is resilient to cultural shifts and able to maintain continuity wherever he or she goes, walking the edge between cultures and sub cultures (as cited in Nayak 2003).

Some Pasifika youth are part of local street gangs in New Zealand. According to Vigil and Yun (1998) street gangs tend to support and teach youth to shift roles and identities with relative ease. They teach youth to master skills that enhance their resilience levels. Of concern to local communities is the tendency for street gang members to build resilience to violent and risk-taking activities. They negotiate their cultural, personal and social identities for the well-being of the gang rather than the individual. Street gangs can be attractive because they provide the individual with a sense of identity, belonging, power and protection. Youth are provided an alternative means of achieving self-esteem (as cited in Tupuola 2006).

Finally, Pasifika Youth in New Zealand seem to identify with multiple identities. They seem to explore their personal identities through a social-cultural lens. Unlike the suggestion of a progressive stage-like theory of adolescent identity, Pasifika youth seem to conceptualise the achieved identity status as a social-cultural and political construct that is temporary and transient in nature (Tupuola, 1998, p.96).

Transition pathways

In this section of the review there will be a close examination of the way transition pathways have evolved in the national and international context. Particular attention

will be paid to community partnerships and market responsiveness, both factors identified as determining successful transition programmes.

In the literature relating to transition, the term 'pathways' recognises that non-academic pathways make just as much contribution to society as academic choices. When the tertiary sector was remodelled in New Zealand, and a tertiary education strategy implemented, tertiary education turned away from being an elite system to one of mass participation (McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman, 1994, as cited in Vaughan, 2003). The various patterns to the pathways also demonstrate a greater complexity in the school to work transition journey (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, as cited in Vaughan, 2003).

International context

Internationally there is evidence to show that youth unemployment, especially in the first year after formal education, can have a negative affect on young people's subsequent job prospects and earning power. In the longitudinal study of Australian Youth (LSAY) the first year out of school sets a pattern for those young people, and especially for those who do not obtain tertiary qualification (cited in Boyd & McDowall, 2004). Lamb and McKenzie (2001) found that those who spent their first year out of school in fulltime work, study or training were more likely to use these experiences as stepping stones to a successful transition. Their research along with the LSAY findings demonstrates the importance of working with youth to give them the necessary support required for successful transition and to set out transition pathways that will support their journeys.

The New Zealand context

In New Zealand transition pathways were articulated by government through the government's goal for youth transition. The Local Mayor's Task Force strategy is that all 15 to 19 year olds will be transitioned into employment or further education or training by 2007. These pathways are designed to assist in their long term economic independence and well-being (Ministry of Social Development, 2005). The government strategy was to seek cooperation between mayors and local councils, to create local and national forums which will address the issues of income and work, thus providing opportunities for local governments and private providers to come up with creative initiatives, which address unemployment issues in localised areas.

Partnership model of creating transition pathways

An example of this partnership here in New Zealand is the relationship between the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET) and government bodies such as the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Department of Work and Income (DWI), Employment Community Groups (ECG) and local secondary schools. These groups work as collaborative partners to deliver the governments strategy. This initiative in Auckland has been in place since 2004. The transition support provided by COMET is based on a mentoring framework carried out by youth transition brokers (YTB) in the South Auckland area. The service works in partnership with schools where brokers are based at the school site where they mentor youth through the transition pathways (COMET, 2006).

COMET has undertaken research to examine their service performance. Through interviews they sought direct feedback about the quality of service the school leavers and their families experienced. The analysis of data gathered included; school-leaver introduction to the service, number of youth broker contacts that the school leaver experienced, quality of support school leavers received from the brokers, and information they received about placements. The findings from COMET's research (2006) concluded that most clients rated the service highly. Families were reported as having high levels of support for the service although they were at times unaware of the function of the service. Recommendations from the research were that the community needed to have a greater level of access to the youth brokers and the service needed to be more visible in the community. The report also highlighted the key strengths of the service. These strengths were the frequency of the contact with the young person, the ongoing support from the youth broker, and the relationship the youth broker had established with the family. This initiative is a national example of how an organisation supports the youth development concept of working with young people in the context of their families, peers, school and communities.

The COMET report (2006) also commented on a typical transition pattern for a school leaver in South Auckland. The youth in this area may take some months to find employment or settle into training. Once placed in a training destination, young people will move into employment from six months to one year later. This supports the view that it is only after the first year that a so called sustainable destination for a young person can begin and be assumed. A youth transition service therefore needs to support

a young person for up to a year after leaving school. This supports the LSAY Australian research already discussed in this section of the literature review.

Market responsiveness

Morrison and Loeber (2004) challenged a general disregard of the local labour market in the literature on youth transition and the development of appropriate pathways. Most of the education literature on youth transition ignores the local labour market as an independent variable. Rice's (1999) work based on the England and Wales' youth cohort studies, examined and demonstrated how local conditions influence a young persons decision to remain in fulltime education or to seek employment. Local conditions particularly affect young males with weaker academic qualifications.

In Morrison and Loeber's research about youth transition and the local labour market (2004), a comparison between an urban school (Mana College in Wellington) and a rural school (Kawerau College in Kawerau) yielded findings that did not match generalisations found in education literature about rural youth and small town youth. These researchers found that there was a positive relationship between the local unemployment rate and the retention of seniors at secondary schools. More research in this area is important to develop further findings about labour market opportunities, aspirations for students and the development of appropriate transition pathways (as cited in Boyd, McDowall & Cooper, 2002).

Critiquing research in the field of transition pathways

Tannock (2001) provides challenging research in this area of transition. His research examines the way youth position themselves in the workplace. He believes that the pathway model focuses on youth as they move among the workplaces and not as they act within workplaces. Youth work researchers have tended to ignore the subjectivity and agency of youth as a worker. According to Tannock (2001), researchers tend to look at the way youth view jobs as either good or bad. There are four distinct bodies of literature in the field of youth and work which is youth labour market, school to work, student worker and social reproduction. Tannock believes that each of these bodies of literature is blinded by the pathway model and does not look at youth work conditions.

Youth floundering according to Tannock (2001), may be exacerbated at work because they face prejudicial and short-sighted hiring practices from employers. He claims

traditional transition courses do not prepare youth to face these hurdles. Most bridging programmes are designed to improve the skill level and work preparedness of young workers. However, they do not focus primarily on dispelling employer prejudice against youth. Tannock (2001) believes that transition courses need to radically change their content and prepare youth to be prepared for the barriers they may face, such as racism, to be resilient and persevere in the face of adversity to achieve their goals.

Educators and policy makers call for bridging programmes to solve the problems of youth floundering thus implying that floundering is essentially a matter of youth deficits, but fail to point out the prejudice amongst adult employers. As Tannock (2001) states; “The solution does not fit the problem” (p 37).

An example of employer prejudice faced by Maori and Pasifika young people in New Zealand is the difficulty these young people face when trying to find apprenticeship placements. According to a Tertiary Education Commission report, (2005), there is a wide gap that exists in the number of modern apprenticeships available to Maori and Pasifika students, compared to the opportunities for Pakeha young people. This gap needs to be addressed. The findings of this research will add to the body of literature in this field and offer some solutions.

Scott and Brislen (as cited in Boyd, McDowall & Cooper, 2002) examined education and training issues that influence the employability of Maori. They concluded that further information in secondary schools needed to be disseminated in order to support programmes to assist Maori learners. Anae (1997) suggests also that more stepping stones were needed to assist Pasifika students in their transition to tertiary education or the workplace (as cited in Boyd et al., 2002).

Ensuring success of pathways

In further research in the area of transition, the United States based National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) found core commonalities emerge in the quality of the support that ensures the young person’s successful transition from school to the workplace. These emerging commonalities included quality standard based education, exposure to the world of work, structured internships, and support services that meet the specific needs of youth (2004).

Building youth resilience

In this section of the literature review, there will be an examination of resiliency research, a relatively new field. Within this research field there will be a discussion of the place of health content in transition courses, youth health and the role of mentors contributing factors that build resilience in young people. Robert Blum (1998) states the following about resiliency research; “Grounded in the traditions of epidemiology, resiliency research provides a clear picture of the mechanisms which predispose young people to risk and those that buffer or protect” (p. 375).

The resilience paradigm emphasizes strengths, resources and assets of young people. The resilience framework is solution-orientated, emphasising hope and potential (Resnick 2000). Resilience theory supports human development theory which includes such theorists as Eriksson, Bronfenbrenner and Piaget. According to Werner and Smith (1992), resiliency is an innate capacity for self-righting and for transformation and change. In their research into resilience they state that, “Studies of resilience suggest that the nature of resiliency transcends ethnic, social class geographical and historical boundaries” (as cited in Bernard 1999, p. 82)

Bernard (1998) believes that resilience is innate in all human beings – the capacity for health, wisdom, commonsense and positive motivation is in all people despite risk factors in their lives. In the New Zealand context, resiliency can be defined as hauora; a condition or state of strength and well-being.

Resiliency research has challenged educators and policy makers to focus on young people’s strengths and talents rather than their lack of skills. Researchers have found that successful youth programmes vary in content but have similarities at the level of relationships, beliefs, opportunities for participation and a belief in the potential of each student (Bernard 1999). As a result of this research, resilient programmes are developed through key community partnerships. Resilient programmes are focused on enhancing competency in young people. A number of researchers including Jessor, Jessor, Schorr and Little report that programme philosophies are underpinned by seeing youth as part of a solution and not part of the problem (Blum, 1998).

Little’s (1998) work in the area of resilience, identifies the four Cs; Competence, Connection, Character and Confidence (as cited in Blum, 1998). These determinants

are needed for resiliency-based programming. Firstly the programme should support the young person to improve and to show competence in areas such as literacy, employment and interpersonal skills. Strong connections need to be established and maintained by; family members, mentors or teachers, as good quality relationships play an important role in resilience building. Team building programmes that explore character development helps the young person to develop a sense of integrity and to share a sense of caring of others. Lastly confidence building experiences develop self-esteem and self efficacy to achieve goals (as cited in Blum, 1998).

The resilience paradigm according to Reisneck (2000) crosses culture, gender and context boundaries and is underpinned by protective factors. These factors include connectedness to parents, family, school, community and positive relationships with adults outside the families acting in a mentor role. Other protective factors for successful transition are the enhancement of academic and social competencies through planned programme intervention and the participation of the young person in extra curricular activities that develop multiple friendships networks.

Health promoting behaviours to support youth resilience

Why is there a need to highlight and promote the need to ensure that health and wellbeing is central to the process of youth transition? Neinstein (2002) highlights adolescence as a crucial period. He believes during this stage lifelong health habits are formed. Neinstein emphasises that health risk behaviours and health habits have their genesis behaviour in the adolescence period. He argues investment in health promotion and preventative services by educators during this period is most effective.

Juszack and Sadler (1999) support Neinstein's findings in their research conclusions suggesting that the developmental transitions that take place during adolescence make this a fitting time to encourage health-promoting behaviours. Developmental changes during adolescence, facilitates the adolescent's acceptance of responsibility for avoiding health risk behaviours, while at the same time, increasing the risk for engaging in these behaviours.

Hippocrates (460-370 BC) often called the Father of Modern Medicine wrote; "All parts of the body which have a function, if used in moderation and exercised in labours in which each is accustomed, become thereby healthy, well-developed and age more

slowly, but if unused and left idle they become liable to disease, defective in growth and age quickly” (as cited in Hardman & Stensel, 2003 p. 164)

Physical activity and physical fitness have long been associated with health, strength, power, and longevity. The Chinese around 2500BC recorded some of the earliest organized exercises used for health promotion. The Greek physicians of the early fourth and fifth centuries established a tradition of maintaining positive health through the combination of correct eating and regular routines of exercise (Hardman & Stensel, 2003).

Keelan (2000) states; “The health sector is the last of all the sectors to recognise that youth need specialised services” (p.35). Research on adolescent development has implications for designing interventions to prevent health risk behaviours and promote health. For young people to live a healthy work and home life, more transition programmes need to encompass aspects of health education. Keelan (2000) has challenged policy makers in New Zealand to address identified youth health needs. The Youth Health Survey (2002) identified that “Young people who are physically healthy, eat sensibly and are physically active, are better able to manage the physiological changes happening to them and sustain a level of resilience in their lives”

It is becoming clear from international studies in regard to youth that adolescents and youth have specific needs. Young people’s preferred style of health care indicated a preference for youth-specific health services, particularly those linked with other youth activities like recreation and sport. Young people are as a group characterised by great diversity. They have had a wide range of experiences and have different needs and lifestyles. Health content is a vital aspect of any teaching programme during adolescence (Youth Health, 2002).

Some research suggests that young people treat health as a very low priority in their lives. Poor habitual behaviours have set in as semi-permanent trends. New and emerging diseases contribute also to a deadly mix that is changing the health of youth today (World Youth Report, 2003).

Despite the availability of assistance, educational material and advice through various mediums regarding health, youth often ignore health issues. Nutritional practices are

often non-existent. Hectic young lives can lead to healthy practices taking a low priority. The health issues they will inherit as a direct result could be cardiovascular diseases, obesity and eating disorders among many others (World Youth Report, 2003). For those young children and adolescents who participate in physical activity consistently they have high levels of strength and endurance, have healthy bones and muscles, have a better ability to control weight, a reduction in anxiety and stress, and increase levels of self-esteem. On the other end of the spectrum the long-term consequences of inactivity are serious. Researchers in the field of physical fitness also support other research findings stating that childhood and adolescence stages are critical for the acquisition of health behaviour (Kelder, Perry, Klepp & Lytle, 1994). Kelder and associates reported that there was a decline in the level of physical activity during early adolescence especially in low socio-economic groups (Kelder et al., 1994).

Adults who are less active are at a greater risk of heart diseases and developing diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressures (Samman, 1998). To support these findings researchers, Berlin and Colditz (1990) concluded in their research that regular physical exercises has been associated with a reduced risk of all-cause mortality and can reduce adolescents' risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer and diabetes.

Recreational fun can be helpful and creative use of leisure time can increase even marginally the amount of physical activity they undertake. Regular fitness will have a long lasting effect and impact on their current and future mental and physical health (World Youth Report, 2003).

The Ministry of Health report (2002) produced alarming statistics about New Zealand youth. Internationally New Zealand ranked highly in negative statistics; youth suicide rates, teen-pregnancy, abortion, and injuries. The youth population is growing rapidly. Healthy young people become healthy adults; therefore, it is in the long term interest of the community, to establish a strong platform from which to begin a naturally habitual lifelong commitment to health.

Emotional health

Health has more than just a physical dimension according to the Youth Health (2002) report. For example Maori health has four equal elements, *te taha hinengaro* (emotional

and mental health), te taha whanau (connection to family), te taha wairua (spiritual health), and te taha tinana (physical health) (Durie, 1999).

Emotional well-being is another important benefit of physical activity amongst adolescents. Calfas and Taylor (1994) reported higher levels of self esteem and lower levels of anxiety symptoms amongst adolescents. Howard and Johnson (2000) believe that young people displaying resilient behaviour talk with a sense of self autonomy and personal agency or self efficacy. They do not see themselves as victims and they do not expect personal weaknesses as unchangeable traits that prevent them from being successful in the future (Howard & Johnson, 2000).

However, Smelser (1989) suggests that some youth in their late teens experience discomfort and confusion in their “loose role involvement” (p.84). These feelings combined with significant amounts of free time and boredom can potentially lead to involvement in undesirable activities.

Racism, according to Eisler and Hersin (2000) can impact on health in two ways. Firstly by limiting access to health promoting goods and services and secondly by causing personal and psychological suffering. This personal and psychological suffering can be experienced, in every-day situations on a personal level, or more broadly through government and local government policy. Examples such as residential segregation and labour market discrimination contribute to poor health outcomes for minority groups. Continued research in this field is needed to determine the association between the exposure to racism and health outcomes and identify the pathways; social, structural, psychological, and behavioural, by which racism may affect health and transition to a better life (Eisler and Hersin, 2000).

Racism then directly impacts emotional health. This in turn impacts on physical well being and affects Pasifika youth employment opportunities. In 2006, Pacific Islanders were found to have a high risk for infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis. Identified causal factors included; poorer preventive care, health access, diagnosis, and assessment because of linguistic, cultural, and social barriers (Ministry of Social Development 2006). These findings suggest the need to identify and develop cultural, appropriate prevention strategies.

Howard and Johnson believe it is paramount to increase participation of ethnic minorities in health promotion programmes. They believe the strongest model is first to locate the help of community and elicit community leaders, secondly utilise personnel who are culturally compatible with the target group and then to evaluate ethnic group dynamics and responses to specific prevention programmes and disseminate the results to the community (Howard and Johnson 2000).

Mentoring to support youth resilience

In order for young people to be supported into the world of work or tertiary study, research states that mentors play a key role. The importance of connectedness is a theme in the literature, a close relationship with at least one adult is identified as important. Reisneck (2000), states that “This sense of connectedness to adults is salient as a protective factor against the ‘quietly disturbed’ and ‘acting out’ behaviours of adolescents” (p.15). Furthermore, there is a body of research evidence which suggests that while strong verbal and communication skills and easy temperament is important, planned strategic interventions by mentors can reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes for students.

Young people need help to secure and retain a placement in education, training or work suitable to students’ strengths and needs. They need support to access a range of services which could include accommodation and counselling. Therefore, the role of a mentor or in some cases, a transition broker, is a vital factor in ensuring the successful transition of the student. “A mentor,” according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) “is an older more experienced person who seeks to further the development of character and competence in a younger person by guiding the latter in acquiring mastery of progressively more complex skills and tasks in which the mentor is already proficient” (as cited in Coldicott, 2003 pg 84).

An example of successful mentoring in the New Zealand context, are the Gateway coordinators, who according to Boyd and McDowall (2004), played a pivotal role in successful transition closely monitoring students’ work placements. The Gateway programme in New Zealand secondary schools facilitates the initial school-to-industry pathways through work experience initiatives and ongoing mentoring and monitoring.

Group cohesion

“Group cohesion is an important construct in group processes and has profound effects on team outcomes and performance”(Haager & Chatzisarantis, 2005, p.92).

Robinson and Carron (1982) reported that teams that are high in cohesion are also resistant to disruptive elements such as students dropping out of educational programmes. In their research they found that students who were in teams that were cohesive suffered less from anxiety and disruptive elements were minimized. Teams high in cohesiveness often report elevated levels of motivation and experienced high levels of collective efficacy (as cited in Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2005).

Challenge to the resilience paradigm

As this area of resilience research is still evolving there needs to be a greater discussion around sociological issues that affect youth development, for example, racism, sexism, class and poverty. Although resilience could perhaps be considered innate, environmental and societal factors must be taken into account in this formative stage of development. An example of this already discussed in this review is the extremely low percentage of Pasifika youth in modern apprenticeships.

Peters and Thurlow (2003), state that cultural identity is a critical component of personal resilience. Young people are most at risk when disconnected from this identity. When cultural connections are strong young people are more resilient and the capacity for transformation is strengthened. A strong cultural identity then is important for developing resiliency. However further research is needed into aspects of Pasifika culture that possibly inhibit resilience.

Jack Block (2001) challenges the underlying philosophies of resilience theory. Block argues that girls are more at risk due to their emerging sexuality and gender, and cultural expectations make girls less resilient. Jack Block’s research also concluded that black adolescents had lower levels of drug and alcohol use as well as lower rates of depressions from white youth. However, patterns reversed during adulthood. Resilience theory according to Block can be somewhat naïve in a complex world. He believes longitudinal studies are required to look at how youth have been resilient into middle age.

The role of government in youth transition

The role of government in youth development, Higgins (2002) argues that how youth transition is conceptualised is important and will have an affect in the way youth development policies are planned and implemented. Policies should reflect the complexities that young people face in their everyday life, when they transition from school to either employment or tertiary studies. An example could be relocation and the dislocation of family and peer relationships that this could cause.

According to Keelan (2000) youth policy documents fail to acknowledge the significance of class. Keelan also points out that ethnicities have not been referred to specifically in the definitions of youth development. Intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic relationships according to Keelan, will be different and both need to be considered within the context of youth development. In addition Keelan places further emphasis on transitional courses by stating that in order for transition programmes to be sustained, they must be well resourced and be delivered in a committed and passionate way.

Youth policies need to provide youth with a belief in a promising future that offers real social and economic opportunities. Without the hope of achieving a modicum of socio-economic stabilities, youth have little incentive to invest in education and their futures and have little incentive to avoid unhealthy habits (Neinstein, 2002).

Youth are often caught up in risk-taking behaviours where the negative consequences can be lifelong or often resulting in death (Youth Health 2002). Government agencies and local governments should be looking at creative new ways and ideas to combat emerging adolescents' health threats and issues (World Youth Report, 2003)

Conclusion

For transition programmes to be sustainable the young person must be at the centre of the decision making process at all levels. Sustainable transition programmes will have the following features; adult mentors, relevance to youth, flexibility and resilient strategies. Finally sustainable programmes must be underpinned by an appreciation that all dimensions of health must be taken into account when dealing with Pasifika youth.

An international review of literature on effective transition programmes from a number of countries identified six key factors. These are; a healthy economy, well organised

pathways, wide spread opportunities that combined studies with workplace experience, tight knit safety nets for at risk students, good information and guidance and effective institutions and processes (Boyd & McDowall, 2004).

The literature review has outlined the challenges researchers face in the field of youth transition. More research into class and ethnicity is a key component in moving forward positively in regards to youth transitional pathways. The relationship and processes of class set boundaries for youth. “It is the pressure set by capitalism which establishes contours of youth experience” (Wyn & White, 1997, p. 38). The literature review also highlights the limited research available on Pasifika students’ experiences of transition. The proposed research is intended to add to the body of research on transition, with a particular emphasis on Pasifika youth. It will also provide new research findings on transition courses that focus on health and wellbeing as a key component in curriculum implementation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The research topic has evolved from the researcher's involvement in working with South Auckland Pasifika and Maori youth for over four years. Some of these youth have been traumatised by their school experiences and have had to face some enormous barriers when transitioning from school into the work place or further tertiary education. The research study explores the perceptions and experiences of what the Samoan youth view as positive influences and negative influences of participating in transition courses that are set up to prepare them for the workplace or further study.

After selecting the topic, I explored the research frameworks that would be most appropriate for the research. As a researcher and a Samoan male, the framework is closely aligned to my values. It was important therefore, to take into account the indigenous approaches in relation to this research. Diane Mara's (1999) list of considerations for those researchers who are involved with Pasifika contexts is acknowledged. They include appropriate face to face methodologies where participants can speak their first language and the need to build mutual respect, trust and credibility between researcher and the researched is prioritised (as cited in Mutch, 2005).

In regard to the indigenous approaches, as a Samoan I followed culturally appropriate norms and protocols in order for the Samoan youth to fully participate in the research. The willingness for the young men to openly express their life experiences captured the sense of trust they had in me that accentuated the connections the participants and I shared. The entry into the lives of these Samoan youth was based on shared journeys as marginalised youth. The participants and I shared experiences of cultural displacement, colonialism and prejudice. We also shared an understanding of transient and fluid ethnic and personal identities.

Does this research require a methodology that is radical in approach? Is it the intention of the research findings to bring about radical change in society? The participants have shared their own stories of their experiences and I believe, it is through the interpretations of their stories, they could be empowered to make changes in their own lives based on the experiences of participating in the research.

As a result of these considerations, the research methodology is qualitative, interpretive and follows a multi-case study approach. As Samoan protocol was adhered to, my integrity remained intact.

Why qualitative research?

In this section, there is a discussion of why I selected a qualitative approach versus a quantitative approach. A particular strength of qualitative research is the richness and detail of the data. The in-depth study of relatively focussed areas means that qualitative research enables the researcher to deal with complex social situations. One main major feature is the research focuses on ordinary events in natural settings. Qualitative research can tolerate certain uncertainties and contradictions better than quantitative research. This is due largely to the unique feature of the qualitative analysis which often opens up the possibility of more than one explanation being valid (Denscombe, 2003).

Qualitative research consists of systematic inductive inquiry, as the researcher collects and analyses data which builds a theoretical framework to explain the data collected. In this way, qualitative research seeks to discover connections between theory and the real world (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In contrast positivism is a research paradigm which contradicts the relationship arrangement that is necessary for in-depth analysis of the real world. Roberts (1981), Oakley (1981), Stanley and Wise (1983) argue against such research paradigms that place quality on neutral and objective methodologies (as cited in Marshall & Rossman 1999). For example, positivism suggests that the researcher can “stand back from the object of study and be neutral and dispassionate in analysing its’ facts” (Court, 1989, p.54).

Why the interpretive paradigm?

The interpretive approach according to Neuman (2003) is the foundation of social research. The techniques that researchers utilise are sensitive to the context. The

researcher needs to get inside the thinking of the participants in the way they view the world. They are more concerned with achieving an empathetic understanding, than testing laws of human behaviours, as positivists researchers are.

The interpretive paradigm is suited to this study. Exploring the views of the participant's transitional journey in an in-depth and naturalistic setting has allowed me to appreciate lived experiences and world realities from the participant's perspective. Thus the interpretive nature of the research has enabled the participant and myself to engage in deep and meaningful conversations. The interpretive paradigm is acknowledged by Clarke (1997), as a relevant approach to this type of research because it;

....views reality as consisting meaning shared by members of the social group...social reality only exists insofar as members of the social group defines their social reality in accordance with meaning which constitutes that reality...this is the everyday world of commonsense where ordinary people understand, interpret and give meaning to their actions and social practices (p.37).

In contrast to researchers from a positivist view, interpretive researchers spend many hours in direct personal contact with those being studied. The interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds (Neuman, 2003).

Neuman (2003) also suggests that interpretivists want to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied or how individuals experience daily life. Positivists can be one dimensional and avoid asking important questions, whereas interpretive researchers assume that multiple interpretations of human experience are realities, and that people create interpretations and meanings of their everyday social interactions.

Why the multi-case study approach?

The case study approach during the early 1970's was a response to the perceived inadequacies of the quantitative, experimental and survey methods used at that time to understand social phenomena. The case study method involves detailed description of individual cases, without attempt to claim a representation of a population. Scott and Usher (1999) draw a comparison between the way in which the case study approach

develops theory through categorisation of data and identification of themes. Quantitative experimental and survey research is within a scientific paradigm. The case study approach is within a naturalistic paradigm.

The case study approach is naturalistic and is a valid reliable approach in social research (Anderson, 1989). This is due to the recognised value and reality of the interactive dynamics between the researcher and the participants. In addition, the case study approach highlights multiple realities and complexities which contributes to the end result. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), naturalistic inquiry is best undertaken through case study.

Mitchell, J.C. (1983) (as cited in Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster 2000, p. 165) concurs with Guba and Lincoln (1985) by saying that the advantage of this type of approach is that case study research involves the study of an ‘instance in action’. The rich detail which emerges from the intimate knowledge provides the optimum conditions for the acquisition of those illuminating insights of the participants.

Yin (1989) also argues that a case study represents a method of learning about complex instances through description and contextual analysis. The result is both descriptive and theoretical in the sense that questions are raised as to why the instance occurred as it did, and with regard to what maybe important to explore in similar situations.

This case study inquiry has understood the multiple realities, interpretations and perspectives of Samoan youth. The methodological position adopted, has created an understanding of the varying constructions of realities that have been brought to consensus through the dialogue between the researcher and the Samoan Youth.

Court (1989) states that “Research is viewed as collaboration between researchers and the researched” with the interview being a “mean of generating theory collectively” (p.60).

Research participants and research gathering techniques

Purposive sampling was utilised, as there was criteria for selection of the participants. Marshall and Rossman (1999) point out that purposive sampling is appropriate when

investigating something which is relatively unknown. The researcher is given the liberty to select the participants that possess the information that the research requires.

The rationale for purposive sampling in this study is that a specific group has been targeted to provide new research in the field of Samoan youth. The participants were selected from youth who have attended transitional courses in the South Auckland area. They are Samoan males between 18 and 21 years of age and have left the course/courses for three months or more.

The technique for gathering data was through in-depth one to one interviewing as framed by the case study approach. The purpose of this research was to attempt to understand and reflect on the perspectives and personal accounts of eight Samoan male youth coping with entry and adjustment challenges associated with transition from transitional courses to work. Exploring the views of the participants' transitional journeys to work has provided an appreciation of the lived experiences and world realities from the participants' perspectives.

When conducting the in-depth interviewing, the researcher was positioned to understand how each participant understands, explains and describes important personal issues that impact on ordinary lives. This form of data collection allows for participants responses to be gently probed for depth of meaning and understanding (Kvale, 1996).

As each participant constructed and reconstructed their stories, the researcher was able to examine an issue from multiple perspectives. This method called for flexibility as supplementary questions emerged during the conversation, they were then pursued, to probe deep into meanings constructed, leading to a deeper understanding of each word, each sentence and phrases that made up the stories being told (Kvale, 1996).

Qualitative researchers rely predominantly on an in-depth interviewing approach. Kahn and Cannell (1957) describe interviewing as a "conversation with a purpose" (as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.108). Patton (1990) categorises interview into three general types; informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardised open-ended interview. All three approaches were utilised. The interviews varied in terms of structure and time.

Marshall and Rossman (1999), believe that qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explored a few general topics to help uncover the participants' views but otherwise respected how the participant framed and structured the responses. This in fact is an assumption fundamental to qualitative research. The participants' perspective on the phenomenon of interest unfolded as the participants were involved in the interview.

The questions enabled the participants to engage in an interactive conversation with the researcher. The interview schedule was conducted over a course of three months. The conversational individual interview let the participants expand on their responses.

Research questions

1. How important is your Samoan identity to you?
2. How was Samoan culture and language reflected in the transition course?
3. What did you learn about yourself during the transitional course?
4. What were your specific learning goals and did you achieve them?
5. How were your unique strengths developed within the transitional course?
6. Did you encounter any barriers to learning during your transitional course?
7. What aspects of the transition course do you think helped you?
8. What aspects of the transition courses do you think did not help you?
9. How did learning about yourself during the course help you with your ability to work successfully in your current work context?
10. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the transition experience?

Data Procedures

The collection of data was gathered through interviews that were semi-structured in nature. The participant's answers to the questions were by way of story-telling that were narratives. Narrative inquiry opened a way to understand each person, caught in action, constructing meanings of their subjective experiences. Clough (2002) argues that;

These experiences are complex, multi-faceted, and thus open to multiple interpretations and understandings. Therefore, when the researcher works with narratives, a social research stage emerges where the common-sense

understanding of data is being challenged. Narrative inquiry incurs a question as to “what is possible to do” with the richly lived experiences (p.4).

Although I had planned to interview participants at Auckland University of Technology as it was a requirement, this did not happen. The participants were reluctant to leave the South Auckland area. I therefore made informal arrangements with the youth to meet them at their homes. When I arrived I first spent time with the parents of the participants, sometimes having a meal with them. I then gained permission to interview the youth from their parents, even though all participants were over sixteen years of age, and in a western ethical context, parental consent would not be required. In order to have an uninterrupted time for interviewing, the participants and I went to a restaurant, where over sharing more food, the interviews evolved. The participants were then taken back to their families, where I debriefed both the participants and their family members, discussing the transcripts. This approach of gathering data followed Samoan protocols of respecting the elders, gaining their trust and obtaining their blessings. The sharing of food is symbolic of being accepted into their lives and homes.

Data collection

The interview questions aimed at exploring the various contexts surrounding the participant’s pathway journeys and focused on questions around specific topics. Questions were open-ended. The interview lasted from one and a half hours to two hours. A koha was given to each participant at the end of the interview in appreciation of their time and support, not as an inducement to participate in the research.

The tape recording and written interviews were transcribed within one week after the interviews were conducted. Follow up on clarification of some of the interviews were done by telephone due to participants’ unavailability. I transcribed the first four interviews but recruited the help of a research assistant to transcribe the final four interviews. The participants were identified by their initials.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was gained by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). It was agreed that all participants in the present research would be referred to as a Samoan numerical number (e.g. tasi, lua tolu). Sensitive data which might put them at risk would be removed or modified with the agreement of the participants.

The Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix A) was given beforehand to every potential participant for their understanding of the research. Their participation was voluntary. Before the data from the interviews were processed they had an opportunity to check the accuracy of the transcripts and confidentiality was assured.

Participants could withdraw from the research project at any time without reason and withdraw information they had provided before the information was analysed. No participant withdrew.

The Consent Form (see Appendix B) was signed at the start of the interview. Again before each interview, individuals were reminded that confidentiality was assured and their identities would be kept secret, they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data analysis

In this study, data was analysed thematically. The interviews were transcribed and the transcripts returned to the participants for validation and clarification of the transcribed interview notes. The transcripts were analysed manually for various themes and coded independently. Common themes were categorised and summarised. Descriptions of the participants' perceptions and experiences of various aspects in transition were arranged "by the thematic content of talk" (Roulson, 2001, p. 280). The first step of the thematic analysis involved coding during which I organised the raw data into conceptual categories and created themes or concepts, which I used to analyse the data.

Through coding, the raw data was reduced and thus enabled me to go beyond mere descriptions and interpret data at a more abstract level. Field texts were read and reread, searching for patterns and narrative threads. The weaving together of the field texts occurred slowly while the writing process took shape and form. I was aware of the need to make meanings and social significance of the texts and to negotiate the final form that endorsed the voice of participants.

Building trust

It was important to build trust with the participants so that reciprocal relationships could evolve in order to ensure the participants gave truthful answers and that they understood

that they will not be identified in the findings. It was important that the research met all ethical requirements. Pasifika peoples in some instances have had damaging experiences related to research. In the past, especially in places like the researcher's home country, research was done to the participants, particularly in his parents' time as children. Often the participants had very little understanding of why the research was happening and also often never knew the findings of the research.

The participants have played a central role in shaping the research outcomes. Participants were made aware of the methodology processes and they were given opportunities to verify their transcripts and view the preliminary findings so they could give their feedback about the validity of the data. Respect and reciprocity are key cultural principles in *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way). Therefore it was important for the participants to view the preliminary research findings and verify the analysis. This is in keeping with the principles of the Samoan concept *va fealoaloa'i* (mutual respect) i.e. the concept that exists is a sacred bond between people that must be respected and that the dissemination of the findings honours their mana and personal integrity (Suaalii-Sauni, 2006).

Preliminary biases and limitations

It was important for the researcher to be aware of the biases and limitations of this research. A possible weakness of a case study methodology can be that results may be shaped by the interests and perspectives of the researcher. However to avoid this, participants viewed the transcripts and the findings to ensure that they reflected their voices.

The limitation of the case study approach in this design is that data is being collected from only eight participants. Patton (1990) believes that by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, adds depth and breadth to a study by allowing a wider range of information to be collected, and therefore more comprehensive findings to emerge. Another limitation of the selected methodology is that it is an 'instance in action' and not a longitudinal design. Therefore some of the participants could possibly be unsuccessful workers or even drop out of the researchers' radar in the future.

As a former transition broker, I already had an informed opinion of what I think makes a difference in the successful transition of a Pasifika youth from transitional courses into employment. I was involved with support agencies and in transition courses in tertiary institutions, and had already formed strong opinions whether these support agencies and institutions are supporting the Pasifika youth or not providing effective services. However because the approach is an interpretative approach, I ensured that the participants had opportunities to view their transcripts and agree whether they have been transcribed accurately and that was what they have wanted to say.

Conclusion

The methodology selected for this research was the most appropriate approach, as I wished to deeply interpret the transition experiences of Samoan youth, so that this research can add to the qualitative body of research that should inform future government policy. It is important that Pasifika people are not merely a statistic but their voices are really heard and are listened to.

Chapter 4: Findings and emerging themes

Introduction

This chapter presents the views and experiences of the participants involved in the research. The common themes across participants, generated from the interviews have been analysed. Participants' views have been described in this chapter through using their own statements. At the beginning of the chapter, an introduction of each participant's history will be presented in order to contextualise the research. The names of each of the eight participants have been coded to conceal their identities. The participants have agreed to this process. The codes are numbers in the Samoan language, starting with *numela tasi* (number one) through to *numela valu* (number eight). There will be a table of data that will illustrate a tally of information about the cohort.

The emerging themes that will be discussed are; who are the youth, resilience, tutors, course content, transference and sustainability. The emerging themes will be supported by the analysis of sub-themes.

Participants' information

Participant #1: Tasi

Tasi is 20 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is New Zealand born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Tasi left school half way through Year 12, when he was asked to leave because of behavioural issues ranging from not concentrating in class to fighting. Tasi achieved his NCEA level 1 and some Level 2 credits.

Tasi attended and completed two transition courses, before working as a painter. At this stage he has not achieved his goal of wanting to be a policeman. Tasi is presently a member of a South Auckland youth gang.

Participant #2: Lua

Lua is 18 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is New Zealand born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Lua left school in August during Year 12. The report stated that he was a disengaged student who did not want to be at school. The career's advisor arranged for Lua to attend a transition course. Lua achieved his NCEA Level 1 and some Level 2 credits.

Lua attended and completed one transition course, before becoming a builder's labourer. He went from one company as a builder's labourer to another in hope of securing his ultimate goal of being a builder's apprentice. This has not happened and due to the shortage of jobs in the building industry he has moved to the steel industry, where he is a machine operator.

Participant #3: Tolu

Tolu is 19 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is Samoan born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Tolu left school at the end of Year 11 on his own accord. He did not achieve any credits.

Tolu attended and completed one transition course. At the time of the interview, Tolu was unemployed. His dream is to become a mechanic and own his own shop. Tolu does not belong to a gang but most of his close friends and family members have gang affiliations.

Participant #4: Fa

Fa is 20 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is New Zealand born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Fa left school in April during Year 13 because of behavioural issues. Fa achieved his NCEA level 1, some Level 2 and Level 3 credits.

Fa attended and completed one transition course, before becoming a builder's labourer. He has had a few jobs in the building industry but his ultimate goal is to become a policeman. This has not yet happened and he is currently working as a machine operator in a concrete-making company. He is a member of a South Auckland youth gang.

Participant #5: Lima

Lima is 18 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is Samoan born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Lima left school in July of his Year 12, because of behavioural issues according to a report from school.

Lima achieved his NCEA level 1 and some Level 2 credits.

Lima attended one transition course but left two weeks before the end of the course to take up a position as a mechanical workshop assistant with the hope of securing an apprenticeship. This had not happened at the time of the interview although he has been in the job for one year and has become a reliable worker.

Participant #6: Ono

Ono is 21 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is New Zealand born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at his girlfriend's home. Ono left school at the end of Year 13. Ono achieved his NCEA Level 1 and has achieved some Level 2 and some Level 3 credits.

Ono attended and completed one transition course and has been in the same job since leaving the course. He is employed as a clerical worker. He has been promoted to the accounts department. Ono is happy with his work prospects and all that he has achieved so far.

Participant #7: Fitu

Fitu is 20 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is Samoan born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home with his girlfriend and baby. Fitu came to New Zealand in his final two years of secondary school. Fitu left school at the end of Year 13. He did not achieve any credits.

Fitu attended and completed two transition courses, before securing a job as a mechanical workshop assistant. At the time of interviewing he had moved to a new position where he quickly was promoted to a workshop team leader. He has yet to secure an apprenticeship. Fitu has bought panel-beating equipment and works from home as a second job. Fitu is a member of a South Auckland youth gang.

Participant #8: Valu

Valu is 21 years of age and lives in South Auckland. He is New Zealand born, is bi-lingual speaking Samoan and English and presently lives at home. Valu was expelled half-way through Year 13 due to behavioural issues such as fighting and smoking. He achieved NCEA Level 1 and some Level 2 credits.

Valu has attended and completed one transition course, before taking up a position as a builder's labourer. He has been in the position for nearly two years. He has not achieved his ultimate goal of securing an apprenticeship. He is a member of a South Auckland youth gang.

Information summary

The following table provides a summary of the participants' information.

Table 4.1 Participants information

Age	2 x 21, 3 x 20, 1 x 19 2 x 18
Area of residence	Manurewa, Mangere, Penrose, Otahuhu and Otara
Credit level achieved	6 x NCEA Level 1, 4 with some NCEA Level 2, 2 with some NCEA level 3 credits and 2 with no credits.
Behavioural issues at school	7 left school due to behavioural issues ranging from disengagement to violent behaviour
Transitional courses completed	6 completed one course and two completed 2 courses
Language	All can speak Samoan and English. Some can speak Tongan and Niuean.

Emerging themes

In exploring factors that influenced students' transitional journey into the workplace, the following themes have emerged. They include: who the Samoan male youth in the study are, how the transition courses supported the participants to be resilient during the

course and in the workplace, and how tutors and/or mentors either supported them on the transition journeys or hindered their development. There will then be an analysis of curriculum content; what the participants perceived as being enriching content or content that was not useful to them while in transition. Finally an analysis of participants' comments in relation to how they have transferred and sustained what they have learned from the course content into their work and life contexts. Each broad theme will be analysed within sub-themes. Extracts from the interviews transcripts will be presented to support these themes.

Characteristics of Samoan male youth in this research

All participants identify themselves as Samoans. Five of the participants are New Zealand born and three are Samoan born. They have attended one or more transition courses before entering the workplace and all of the participants have successfully completed at least one of these transitional courses. One of the participants left a course to take up employment. Seven out of eight are employed at the time of the interviews. Four out of seven have remained in the same job since leaving the courses twelve months ago. Three have changed employment at least once and changed industries. All the participants live in South Auckland and have attended local decile 1 schools in the area.

Culture and language

All participants were very proud of their Samoan culture as identified in the following extracts. Some of the participants proudly displayed their Samoan identities through their cultural pe'a (tattoos). They were proud of Samoans who were doing well in other parts of the world.

The importance of my Samoan identity to me. It's really important. It shows a lot about you. It's also about where you come from (Lua).

I know where I'm from and I'm proud of that (Tolu).

I hear a lot of SAs are all over the world and they are doing really well even in LA USA there's lots of gangs but the SAs rule. I have my tattoos as well and it cost me \$600 on the left and \$350 for the one on the right. Lots of SAs on them (Tasi).

I am proud of my heritage and am thinking of becoming a matai (chief) and follow my father's footsteps. It is a big influence in how I think and act. It is an influence when I see Samoan sports stars, I aspire to be them and it makes me

proud to be a Samoan. I dream of one day living back in Samoa and having my own business or even becoming a minister in the government (Fa).

All participants speak Samoan and English. They all have a degree of fluency in both languages. Samoan language is used predominantly at church and within their home environments.

I can sort of speak Sa and most of my family talk in Sa which is really cool (Lima).

I can speak Samoan. My Samoan is better than my English (Fitu).

I was born in NZ but I learned the language, Samoan language when I was little and I'm fluent at it (Valu).

I speak Samoan at home and at work we are encouraged to speak English but Im Ok with both (Tasi).

Family commitment

In this research most of the participants still lived at their family homes. Two participants lived with their girlfriends' families, where they cared for their young babies. All participants were supported by their parents whilst attending their transition courses.

My father would drop me off to the course everyday and he either picks me up after or I catch the bus home (Lima).

There was evidence that parents provided supportive environments that enabled the participants to function well in their work lives. However, for some participants, family commitments dictated the work that they are now undertaking.

At the moment I can't chase my dream because I am helping my mum and dad earn some money. So I'm working in a concrete company and they pay me well. I think when my parents are happy then I can choose where I want to go (Tasi).

I think our families are too demanding and can get in the way of our dream, but I also think it is our responsibility as their kids to look after our parents when we get older and I want to do that (Fitu).

School experience

Most participants did not have good experiences of the secondary school system. One of the participants who came from Samoa when he was 16 years of age was more

positive. All participants in this study were encouraged strongly to exit prematurely and others were expelled. This resulted in all participants not completing their final years at secondary school.

...unlike at school where teachers did not help us at all and when you asked a question they don't explain anything. It wasn't easy to ask the question so when they don't give an answer, you don't want to ask again and you don't learn anything (Tolu).

My teachers at school were very boring and they didn't help me want to come to school (Lima).

I didn't because the teachers were not very good....They always thought I was making trouble and never took an interest in what I wanted to do..... The school was so boring and whenever you do something like talking to your mate, you get into trouble. It was very embarrassing at school all the time when teachers tell you off even though I didn't do anything. They used to say that I would be in jail or be killed (Fa).

Other environmental influences

Other environmental influences that impacted on the participants' lives were their connections with other community groups. Besides the family connections, they were actively involved in church groups and local gangs.

My family kept sticking at me to stay away from this stuff. When I see the boys who are my friends and who are in gangs, I lay it down and tell them that I am their friend but I don't want to be in their gang (Lua).

For some of the students who were close to the gangs and getting into trouble (Tolu).

Yes I go to church and yeah we talk the Samoan language (Tasi).

I get involved in the youth group. The Samoan culture is important in the church environment and your community, and the belief or the faith is very important too (Fa).

Personal Challenges

There were a range of personal challenges that participants faced when leaving school. One of the challenges that were common to all participants was their struggle with lack of confidence and feeling shy.

The barrier at first was my own confidence. I didn't have any (Lima).

School did not give me confidence (Ono).

I'm too scared to explain myself (Fita).

I always used to be shy of talking (Valu).

I used to be very shy (Fa).

Aspirations

During the interviews the participants talked about their aspirations. Some talked about their aspirations as future dreams. Other participants saw their aspirations as very much part of their life journeys. They discussed their aspirations in the context of exploring and adopting a step-by-step approach in their daily lives.

I have always dreamed of being a policeman, so that I can look good and have a cool uniform and catch bad guys. But now I'm older, I want to be a policeman so that I can help my people. Most of the times Samoans get blame for things like violence and robbery. When I become a cop, I can help them out. I think they get good money as well (Fa).

I still have my dreams and I would like to earn money and become independent (Tasi).

Resilience

Participants in the interviews discussed how the courses supported them to be more resilient in their life and work context. They contrasted that by talking about how before entering the course they felt shy and not confident. The sub-themes that have emerged are: personal-growth, team cohesion, environmental factors and mentoring. These are all factors that support youth resilience.

This is one thing we learned on the course and that is to be strong to be resilient, I think, to not give up easy (Valu).

We talked about resilient at the course. We just need to keep going. Just need to get back up and keep going. We learned at the course that when you fall off the bike, you have to get straight back on and try again (Fitu).

I learned how to come face to face with your challenges. I try and transfer that to my work. There are times when work is not very nice and it is challenging but I learned at the course that you need to hang in there and make the good choices. You can't leave just because someone says or do something you don't like. And you can't fight people with violence because you will get the sack. At the course we talked about what resilience was and because we talked about it a lot and we wrote about it, when things get tough at work, I think back to the course and I just carry on. I do talk to my girlfriend and we talk about the strategies I learned, like having difficult conversations so that a situation that is not good can be resolved and then you can move on (Tolu).

I learned from the course to never give up, keep on going, aim for something and go for it. We talked a lot about resilient and that we were from a tribe and race of resilient people. I guess we are resilient because we always get up and get to work no matter what we go through (Lima).

On the course we also learned about resilience. It is about what keeps you going and that is important. My family is supportive and also some teachers say that I will never get there. I have a family with a one year old daughter. I have to support my family and keep going (Lua).

I learned a lot. I learned to be myself although I was afraid about meeting other people, the lecturer pushed me and pushed me. He pushed my limits without telling me off and I didn't feel I was being told off. I felt looked after. I think I learned a lot in this transition course because I felt that I could make mistakes, but then it was okay and I could pick myself up (Fa).

Team cohesion

All participants talked about the importance of being part of a team. Team building activities enabled the participants to learn more about their own cooperative strategies, the roles that they play within the team, and how they utilised their strengths for the good of the team. They also learned about other team members' strengths and weaknesses resulting in developing a greater understanding of group dynamics.

We learned about other students in gangs and although we were in the same group in class we got along (Tasi).

This was because one of our tutors helped us to build a team spirit and this was drilled into us at the start. my mates made me feel at home. And I still keep in touch with my mates from that course, even though we went to different schools and live in different areas. Also a lot of us were Samoans and other Pasifika groups so I think that helped (Lua).

Also on this course we trusted each other. I suppose because we really wanted to be at the course and we wanted to succeed (Tolu).

We were like a tight knit team of friends but we were all from different parts of southside and different schools. The course was full of students from schools that used to have fights with my school, but we became friends because our lecturer brought us together. I learned how to communicate and team work. I learned new English words. I learned about words I couldn't pronounce. At the moment I am workshop leader. I have 5 workers underneath me and they are older than me and the course helped me to communicate more. I learned at the course how not to get angry and we used to play games to help us with this. I learned the importance of working together as a team (Lima).

Self growth

The participants talked about the reflective type nature of some of the course content. The participants felt that by giving opportunities for reflection, this enabled them to become more knowledgeable about themselves and better face their personal challenges.

Yes I found out about myself, is that I've become more open, I find it easy to be more open with people and that I can learn more about situations if I put myself in that spot. I used to be very shy (Ono).

I learned to be myself (Lima).

I learned to come face to face with your challenges (Valu).

I'm not shy anymore and I get along with a lot of people like my workmates, my boss and my family (Lua).

I've learned to be confident and do things myself. I've learned to be a team member, and to mix and mingle. How not to be shy and learning about other interests (Tolu).

Environmental factors

A supportive learning environment helped students to feel comfortable and safe. This in turn encouraged the participants to keep going with course goals and meet assignment deadlines. Participants were motivated to attend the courses where the environment was conducive to learning.

I was happy and every morning I would wake up and say to myself, I need to get to the course because I enjoyed myself yesterday (Tasi).

I really enjoyed it. I liked the environment. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me was the course. It made me feel very comfortable and most of the times I felt that we were at home (Lima).

...it helped me to get up early. It helped me fit in with the other guys.
It helped my time management. It gave me confidence when I was afraid (Ono).

Mentoring

Some participants experienced external mentoring arranged by course tutors. In some instances the tutors on the course undertook an on-going mentoring role, even after the transition course had been completed. Some participants expressed their disappointment

in not having ongoing mentoring continuing into the first few years of their working lives.

The main lecturer brought in people who could mentor us and although I kept in touch with my mentor during the course, I would have liked to keep this up, to have someone outside my family to check my work situation (Tasi).

My lecturer also came back and helped me negotiate my pay and now I can do it myself (Lua).

The fact that we could call our tutor at any time gave us the confidence as well to front up the next day and now it has given me confidence at work as well (Fa).

The tutors

There was variability in the quality of tutors on the courses. All participants commented on the tutors that they felt comfortable with. When these tutors were teaching them, they experienced a sense of safety. They appreciated tutors who provided them with worthwhile learning experiences. The participants also discussed the tutors who they felt did not respect them and found these tutors difficult to understand.

The positive comments about tutors are as follows:

My lecturer used to push me to the limits but he was committed to my learning... but my lecturer used to make us learn something from the sport that we played (Valu).

At the course the teachers were always encouraging me and the rest of the class to attend, and they would ring you at home if you don't turn up (Fitu).

Our lecturer always helped us and he kept explaining until you get it. He really did it for us to get a better life.....my lecturer use to push me to my limits but he was committed to my learning (Lua).

The Pasifika lecturer...made you feel he was alive...he got along with all the guys (Tasi).

Good teachers allowed students to learn more and they do get motivated. We always got told off at school but at this course, we were treated like older people. It was like we were responsible for our own classroom and we were allowed to have it looking the way we wanted it to look. She trusted us and she was always supporting us when people try to blame us for stuff. There was one time the course manager blamed us for graffiti in the toilet and our lecturer asked him to prove it and to name which one did it. He couldn't and we all knew that we didn't do it but because we were PI we got the blame. Because we trusted her we turned up to learn from her (Ono).

At the course, the teacher was always encouraging me and the rest of the class to attend and he would ring you at home if you don't turn up. Our teacher got along with all of us. He also visited our families and would come to special occasions for the family (Fitu).

Our tutors used to teach us that we could achieve. We were taught to think about different ways of doing things and finding the best ways, making the right decision (Fa).

They let us enjoy the learning but at the same time they challenged us with things that we felt we couldn't do but they know we could (Tolu).

The negative comments about tutors are as follows:

I didn't like the tone of the other lecturers. They yelled at some of the guys like school teachers and some of them were not interested. They sometimes didn't bother with our learning (Lima).

The bad tutors weren't helpful. They did not want us to do things that interested us. They treated us as kids, yet they did not come down to our level (Lua).

Did not appreciate what we wanted to do. No motivation and encouragement (Fa).

.....but there were also some that we didn't like. Some of them would give me a hard time and made you feel stupid. When that happened it was hard to stay in the classes but we did because we looked forward to the good ones, and we wanted to finish the course. We couldn't understand one lecturer. He would always give us handouts. We didn't want to listen to him. We would mock him (Valu).

Curriculum content

The analysis of this broad theme is organised into sub-themes. The sub-themes will include discussion of cultural recognition within course delivery and course content, and the positive aspects of curriculum content that participants perceived as being relevant and useful to them as transition learners. There will be specific analysis of reflective writing and the health and physical education content. Lastly there will be an analysis of the negative aspects of course content the participants perceived as not being relevant.

Culture recognition

All participants were proud of their cultural heritage as mentioned earlier in this chapter and participants responded positively when their culture was valued. It was helpful for the participants to reflect on their own cultural norms as well as other cultures in order

to understand themselves and others better. In some cases the concept of culture and the recognition of the Samoan culture was not part of the course content.

Samoan culture and language was not discussed much but just knowing that most of the students were Samoans, made us all aware of the importance of the culture and the Samoan spirit. It was very much surrounded by what Samoan culture and language was all about and having Pasifika tutors helped..... Friends around me who were Samoans would talk with me in Samoan but not with the tutor. The course was about the Pakeha way. We talked about respect and that sort of thing. To be respectful and knowing how to be polite is the Samoan way anyway (Tolu).

Some aspects of the culture were acknowledged because we were mainly Samoans although it depended on the teachers really (Fa).

Course content – positive aspects

The participants identified a range of positive aspects of the courses. The content most participants were positive about included learning experiences such as employment preparation activities, building confidence in presenting projects, and computer and communication skills. They enjoyed researching about different areas of work they were interested in. Specific themes that require further elaboration cover reflective writing and the health and physical education content.

I really enjoyed getting my certificate at the end of the course and it gave me confidence that I have achieved something really good because I didn't get anything at school (Ono).

Also we had to try out a lot of strategies. We had to do cold calling, we were given five minutes to come up with a discussion to argue against the other debating team. This was one of my most favourite activities. Because we didn't do this at school very much and this course we all had to do it and we all improved with debating and defending a point of view. This has helped me in the work place realising that people will have different views on how things work and we need to respect every one around this (Fitu).

I also enjoyed the computer classes, researching about our jobs and what we wanted to do.... I enjoyed learning about power points to do presentations and we have guest speakers from the industry to give us feedback about our work. This was good because we only had a short time to prepare our work. These same guest speakers came to our graduation at the end of the course when we were presented with our certificates (Lima).

Learning about CVs , going for interviews, cold calling, learning about body language and how to read how people are feeling and doing our CVs on the computer.....The employment aspects of the course are good, I suppose because we could do in-depth research into the industry. I studied the

mechanical careers and learned about how many workshops there were, the regulations you need to set up a garage and the equipment you need. I enjoyed presenting this to the class (Tasi).

I enjoyed doing practical presentations..... The presentations was about giving a picture of what our preferred industry is like and what we find out about it through researching it in the library and computers. I felt great about learning more about the building industry by looking for it in the internet and at the workplaces. It means that we had to leave our classrooms to go to the library, or the computer lab or trips to building sites. It was tough writing the essay part of the presentation but I enjoyed the designing of my poster and getting all the information. I remember my class enjoying it as well. The toughest part was to get in-front of a panel of judges to present our posters. But by the time we did that, our tutor prepared us well and we all enjoyed presenting. We all passed that assignment and it felt so good (Valu).

Writing reflectively

In the courses where the participants had to make journal entries, either to recall an experience or to elaborate on their understandings, they enjoyed this experience. They felt that this style of writing impacted positively on the way they learned.

I'm not bad at writing and I really enjoyed writing about any topic. I also like writing love songs and that makes me happy as well. We used to write about anything and we used to be marked on being creative and for writing pages of words. I think I just like rhyming and rapping... My writing gives me a calming and relaxing feeling (Lua).

We wrote journals. We recorded what we were learning through the week. I enjoyed this (Tolu).

We used to do reflections. At the start I didn't write very much but slowly I got to enjoy writing about things we did throughout the day and weeks. It helped me understand the importance of thinking more about things. It reminded me of what I did and how I could do it better (Fa).

I also enjoyed the freestyle writing exercises we used to do. It was about any topic and we didn't need to think too hard because it was just about writing (Lima).

.....anything about a topic that our tutor tells us to write about.....In the end, I think most of the class wrote a lot more than they ever before and it helped us with our reading. It also helped us with our reflective journals (Ono).

Once a week we had to remember what we did throughout the week and we had to write it down. We had to write what we thought of the things that we did and how we can get something out of it, or maybe it was a waste of time. This was very good because it helped us understand how to think deeply about important things (Fitu).

Health and physical education content

Where there was health and physical education in the course content the participants enjoyed this aspect and recognised the value of the learning. For most, this learning area resulted in participants being highly engaged and motivated.

Fitness was important to me. It took my laziness away and it didn't feel like it was hard work. My lecturer made it fun and the boys enjoyed it. It gave me confidence to play sport because I was a big boy and I'm still heavy but at least I feel fitter. I still play touch now which is fun and keeps me fit (Fa).

.... I learned how important it was to keep myself fit and health to be a good worker and to achieve in the workplace.... we had to push ourselves. Fitness was not treated as hard work. It was given to us as a fun thing and we enjoyed it and got fitter without thinking we were working hard. It is important for me because I want to be a cop and to be a policeman you need to be fit. I am a bit slack though because I am not playing any sport but I do train some days to keep me strong for my job (Tasi).

Yes, fitness is sport and because of the way my teacher presented it to us, it made me turn up at times when I felt lazy. We sometimes used to go to the gym to just workout. He motivated people to come and train and it prepared us for the classroom lessons, but sometimes we would go to the basketball hall to play basketball at the end of the day so we have something to look forward to after we did our work (Lima).

Most of the class were aiming for a trade and that is usually physical, so it was very important for us to stay healthy. It also helped us focus on other things like teamwork and supporting each other. I liked it because it helped me get fit and prepared me for the reality of working long hours. The other thing I learned from getting fit is that I think it made me more alert and energetic. It also makes you healthy so that you are always at work instead of staying at home being sick. Oh yeah, leadership was a big part of sport because I learned to captain the teams and so it was up to me to support my team even when we are losing (Valu).

We would go to the gym once or twice a week and be shown how to do exercise properly. We learned how to look after ourselves by caring for our bodies. It has given me a good lesson to stay fit for work as well as for my family. I have a daughter now and I want to be fit for her too so that she stay fit too. I had never been to a gym before so I really enjoyed and learned a lot from that part of the course (Fitu).

I also enjoyed going to the gym because I had never been to the gym before and our lecturer believed in good health and fitness (Fa).

Strengths based curriculum

Participants were positive about the course content when their particular strengths were recognised and when they could further develop their strengths. They felt valued when

their talents were utilised to further help them with new learning concepts and to help scaffold others' learning.

People think that I have a good humour and I had fun doing role plays. I'm a good speaker and I can explain myself. In the communication part of the course I feel confident at least on the outside, to talk in front of the class. I felt that one of my strengths of getting along with a lot of different people was acknowledged because I was often made a leader of the students that were not feeling part of the group, and I helped them fit in (Tolu).

I think that the tutors knew that I really wanted to work hard and achieve and that I was very focused at that. So I think one of my strengths is focusing and the other is communicating well. I'm a good listener and that helps me in the job to get along with others, listen to the boss and carry out directions well. I also enjoy what I am doing, whether at home or at work. I think my strengths are that I'm adaptable. That was what was written on my report at the end of the transition course I fit in and am adaptable to new things. So at work I'm not afraid of change (Lima).

I am level headed and I was told this by my lecturer. I think this has helped me to keep safe (Ono).

Field experiences and work placements

There were two categories of field experiences, industrial related and excursions that broadened participants' life experiences. All participants viewed the field experiences and work placements as positive and valuable experiences, even though one participant did not get the placement he wanted.

He also used to take us to experience the industries like the motor workshops and car sales. I enjoyed listening to the owners of the companies, they would tell us how they made it and that we could do it if we wanted to. Some could talk better and relate to us. They basically said that you have to work hard, and be goal centred (Tasi).

We were placed in work experience during our time on the course and this was excellent because you could do both, study and do practical stuff too. The only thing was that I didn't get the one I really wanted (Ono).

I thought the field trips were great. We went over the bridge and I have never been over the bridge before. It was a new experience but it gave me a new way of looking at things. The world is actually bigger than South Auckland and it is exciting to know other places. We kept going across so that we can see that it doesn't matter how far you have to go to work, you will find the way if you want to. We also visited a lot of different industries to have a good look at what they do. Some of my classmates wanted to be builders, so we checked the builders out at their building places. Some wanted to be mechanics, so we

checked out the mechanical engineering workshops so that the students can really have a good idea of what it is like to be a mechanic (Tolu).

Course content – negative aspects

The negative aspects of the course content included for one participant who said that the course was too short in duration, others talked about the content of some literacy and numeracy activities being too low level, resembling activities they would be given at primary school. Some participants thought that the tutors did not recognise their prior knowledge and experience when planning the course content. Others felt their literacy skills did not improve due to the teachers not knowing how to teach literacy and as a result giving them inappropriate activities.

The course was too short. I felt it would have been much better if it was six months instead of only threethere were some tutors who didn't make the reading tasks interesting.....On the course we had a teacher aid that took us out to do reading and writing stuff but I felt that I didn't really learn very much and I was disappointed about this and I am still feeling that today (Lua).

Some of the maths activities were like we were at primary school....they were too basic and we would finish the tasks early....they needed to be related to our jobs better (Lima).

Some of the course content given out by some of the lecturers was low level and they didn't respect what we already knew. I felt that they should have known us better and planned the course around us as students, instead where some lecturers were just teaching stuff that they have always taught (Valu).

I used to find the lessons too easy so the lecturer used to ask the maths teacher to make the lessons a bit harder. Sometimes he used to take it himself because the maths teacher would be too boring (Ono).

Transference and sustainability

This broad theme will analyse the perceptions of participants in regard to how they have been able to transfer and sustain knowledge learned in transition to their life and work contexts.

Most of the questions at the interview I studied were asked and I felt good answering them because I was prepared. I feel now I can pass that on to my family and mates when they go to their job interviews. The course gave me confidence to stand up and speak. Once the boss asked me to supervise another guy and I had to stand up to him when he refused. It felt great and I knew then I learned something important (Tasi).

One of things that helped me was my confidence. I learned at the course to be strong and be confident. We used to do exercises where we used to debate different subjects. This was usually in the classrooms but sometimes the lecturer would take us out to the carpark or in the shopping mall where there are heaps of people and you have to stand up and give your argument. It was scary at first and then I started to like the idea that I can speak in public and it's OK (Fa).

At work, I am able to use the lessons I learned from the course to make sure I get on with people well, not only my workmates but the customers. I understand how to communicate with them and make them feel comfortable and doing my job well will always make them happy and when they are happy they pay us good money.....My ultimate goal was to be a builder and to complete the course and get the certificate. It wasn't really easy for me, it was hard but those trips to the work sites gave me ideas of what the industry is about. It gave me the knowledge and the willingness to accomplish and complete tasks that were given by the boss (Lua).

What we learned has helped me to be more confident and communicate with people to work harder and give it my all. I've learned to be confident and do things myself. I've learned to be a team member, and to mix and mingle, how not to be shy, learning about other interests (Lima).

The course brought all of us together and we have formed those lasting relationships with my buddies from the course. We still help each other out and we are very close. It was great to get my certificate in the end (Valu).

Learning about myself helped me get promotion at work because the boss can see that I am a good worker, but I can be a good leader as well.... It helped us to think real hard but now I don't have to think too hard about what to do when one of my workers makes me angry. I just sometimes walk away and come back later and sometimes I joke about it and then we all laugh but then sometimes we argue but I don't let it get any worse. All these games we played, I loved them. I love sport and because the course had sport, I enjoyed learning also..... because my goal was to become a panel beater but I ended up as a mechanic. So I work in a workshop in the day but in my spare time I have bought some tools for panelling and do this at home. I am beginning to have a lot of customers. I would like to own my own shop and the course gave me confidence to try and achieve my dream (Fitu).

The course also helped me to be confident in other things. I perform in the choir and this has helped me more to be balanced. At the course we used to talk about getting involved in other things in the community and at church. We talked about helping others and getting involved in volunteer work even if we had to help the old people in our neighbourhood get across the street as well as doing some of their chores if they don't have families around.....The course gave me confidence to stand up and speak. Once the boss asked me to supervise another guy and I had to stand up to him when he refused. It felt great and I knew then I learned something important. The boss gave me leadership..... Now the boss feels comfortable working with me and I think he trusts me. This is what we also talked about during the course, how being honest and being trustworthy is going to help us get somewhere. You have to be trustworthy otherwise your boss cannot give you leadership. This is very

important in team work and in the building industry, there are a lot of us at some of the jobs we do so we have to help and trust each other (Lima).

There are times when work is not very nice and it is challenging but I learned at the course that you need to hang in there and make the good choice. You can't leave just because someone says or does something you don't like. And you can't fight people with violence because you will get the sack (Tolu).

Current work realities

Although participants achieved goals on the courses, most have not achieved their work goals at time of interviewing. In cases where participants wanted to become apprenticeships, either the company cannot afford it, or the employer afforded opportunities of apprenticeships to his own extended family. Only one participant is content with where he is currently, due to a recent promotion.

I still haven't got an apprenticeship and that is what I did the course for. My big boss tells me that he hasn't got an apprenticeship because he gave it to his nephew (Ono).

Yes, I think everything we did at the course helps me with my job at the moment. It isn't where I want to be but at least it's a job (Lima).

I wanted to become a mechanic and run my own shop, but I still don't have a job at the moment. I get a bit down but then I think there are worse things. I thought the part of looking at yourself and how you build resilience was important that you needed to have faith in yourself, although I find it a bit hard now because I still don't have a job (Fa).

My boss can't afford putting me through an apprenticeship because it costs too much and he can't afford to have me in the course and not in the workshop. He tells me that he will train me to be a good mechanic himself. At the moment, he is starting to look at me as a senior person because our company has only four workers and apart from my boss and me, the other two older men are new. They can't speak English so I talk to them in Samoan all the time (Fitu).

I'm supposed to be in the building industry but I'm in the steel industry. Doing my best there until I have the opportunity to get back into the building industry, at least I do think I want to be there, but I'm still exploring different ways (Valu).

I am working as an accounts person in a car hire company. I have been here since I left the course and I'm enjoying it. I have used a lot of what I learned at the course to help me at work. I have now been promoted and I feel good about doing the course because it gave me a big start (Ono).

Chapter 5: Discussion of the findings

Introduction

In this chapter, themes that have emerged from the data are discussed. Prior to making decisions about their future careers, young people need to be provided with strategies that support them to be reflective, flexible and responsive in their work choices and in a variety of work contexts. The discussions in this chapter provide new findings in the area of Samoan youth transition and their current work realities.

Characteristics of Samoan male youth in this research

In Vaughan's (1999) research of New Zealand youth, the researcher describes the way that youth experience transition today compared with previous generations. Vaughan (1999) discusses the journeys that youth move through as a *milling and churning period* which refers to the process of moving between a diverse set of activities, only one of which is work, before choosing to settle into permanent work. While this could be true for predominantly Pakeha New Zealand youth, the participants in this study do not seem to so readily fit into this pattern. Although the Samoan youth in this study may take on various jobs in their youth, there are different reasons for making decisions about work compared to their Pakeha peers. Barriers such as restricted employment opportunities and family commitment pressures are factors that determine the direction that these youth have taken in their early working lives. In this study, the Samoan youth yearn to reach their work goals of securing an apprenticeship training programme. At the time of concluding this study, however, no participants have yet managed to achieve this goal.

Culture, language and identity

All participants were very proud of being Samoan and were immersed in this culture. All participants were bi-lingual and saw the importance of speaking Samoan. The findings in this study support Tupuola's (2000) findings, where these youth from diasporic communities grapple with multiple- identities. The youth seemed to identify

with multiple identities through social-cultural and political constructed lenses. Some of the participants moved between a number of identities, whereas others made a conscious decision to mainly identify with more traditional Samoan expectations.

This concept of multiple identities was evidenced in some participants being comfortable *edgewalkers*. *Edgewalkers* are youth who are resilient of cultural shifts and are able to maintain continuity wherever they go (Kerbs, 1999, cited in Nayak 2003). These participants can spend time in their parents more traditional worlds of being a young Samoan and follow cultural expectations as well as being global young citizens where they are affected by USA influences such as music and fashion. Some participants could also comfortably move from family, to church, hold local gang membership and participate in the large global culture. For some participants though, they made decisions to identify with their family and church communities as they felt that by doing this, they would keep out of trouble, keep safe and better support their families.

Family commitment

Except for one participant who lives at his girlfriend's home, all other participants live at home. All participants in the research came from supportive families. Their parents were supportive of their sons' attending the transition courses and would often drive them to the courses and pick them up afterwards. The parents encouraged their sons to achieve their course goals. In return the participants all felt very responsible to support their families both in time and in financial terms. Two of the participants had young children and had the extra responsibilities of supporting and raising their own families.

The family commitment responsibilities for most participants meant that they put their own career plans on hold and worked in unskilled positions in order to support their families financially. This caused a degree of stress for the participants; however most continue to do it willingly. They want to achieve their own goals but know they need to adhere to cultural expectations to support their families. Along with other societal factors, family commitment pressure is having some impact on the youth achieving their own career aspirations.

School experience

Except for one participant who came from Samoa for his last two years at secondary school, participants did not describe their experiences at secondary school as being

positive. They experienced boredom, embarrassment, and low self-esteem issues. This was due to some of the negative comments made by teachers, for example; *you are going to end up in jail*. Because of these reasons, most participants were reluctant to attend school even though the majority of the participants had successfully attained NCEA Level 1 and 2 credits.

Other environmental influences

The research findings indicated other environmental factors influenced participants' experiences in transition. Besides being part of a large extended family they were also affiliated to church groups and the local gangs. Both these extended groups gave the youth a sense of belonging and purpose.

For some of the participants their social outings consisted of attending church on Sundays and youth groups at the church during the week. This interaction with church-going Samoan communities, gave the participants and their families a greater connection with their traditional homeland of Samoa. Although other participants in the study attended church and youth groups they were also part of the local gang culture. The local gangs gave these participants a sense of belonging and strength. Of concern to local communities however, is that street gang members tend to build their resilience to violent and risk-taking activities (Vigil & Yun, 1998 as cited in Tupuola, 2006).

Personal challenges

All participants talked about feeling shy and that they lacked confidence in a learning environment. Cultural expectations of respecting your elders, in this case the teacher and waiting compliantly for direction meant at times, the participant did not challenge unfair treatment. This unfair treatment impacted negatively on their past school experiences and consequently undermined their confidence as learners.

Aspirations

Participants' aspirations when enrolling in the course/courses was to complete the course and receive a certificate. They focused on this while they were on the course, but also had bigger dreams of becoming apprentices and for some to own their own companies. They wanted to be financially secure to support their families. Most participants saw this as a step by step approach in achieving their dreams and having the courage to overcome barriers that they may face along the way.

Resilience

Personal Growth

There was evidence in the transcripts that the youth valued the transition courses that enabled them to build personal and group resilience. They responded well to learning experiences that developed skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution.

The youth felt that the positive aspects of the courses were when they had opportunities to learn about themselves and their peers. The transcripts revealed that the youth did not see themselves as victims but challenged themselves to keep on going, to achieve their goals and life aspirations. The participants' responses about their own responsibility and their care for others on the courses reflected their growth of personal agency.

Team cohesion

Transition courses that focused on developing team spirit and team cohesion were highly beneficial for the participants. This supports Haager and Chatzisarantis' (2005) findings, where they found that group cohesion had a profound effect on team outcomes and performance. This was evidenced in the comments of participants who talked about trusting each other and wanting their peers to achieve. Where there were high levels of team cohesion, the participants encouraged each other to attend regularly and stay for the duration of the course.

Although the participants came from different parts of South Auckland and sometimes from different rival gangs, successful team building activities bonded them together as a group. Feeling part of a group helped the participants feel less anxious about their transitional journeys. Team cohesion gave the participants a sense of belonging and they experienced high levels of collective efficacy. This supports Robinson and Carron's (1982) study, where teams high in cohesiveness often report elevated levels of motivation (as cited in Haager & Chatzisarantis, 2005).

Environmental factors

For all participants it was important for them to have a learning environment that was emotionally, physically and culturally safe. They needed the tutors to set up conducive learning environments where they could feel comfortable and confident to participate in learning. A supportive learning environment was directly related to how the tutor set

protocols and developed a climate for learning. Environments were variable in the degree of safety.

Mentoring

Resnick's (2000) research into factors that ensure youth transition successfully into the workplace suggests that quality mentoring is a very critical factor. Peters and Thurlow (2003) concur with Resnick and their research findings indicate that positive connections with family members, peers, teachers and 'significant others', help form a supportive web that protects and fosters development.

The participants in this study commented that they knew that quality mentoring could support them in their endeavours. However the levels of mentoring that the participants received during and after the courses was variable. Sometimes the participants were mentored by the tutors who would act as mentors after the course was completed. One participant talked about a tutor helping him when he was at work to get the correct pay and then has kept up regular contact with him. The tutors who were ongoing mentors would support the participants to keep focused and reflective about their life goals. When this happened the participants were highly appreciative of this approach and valued the support. It helped them have a renewed focus on their goals. They could discuss their own life decisions and because they trusted their mentors they valued their inputs. Some of the participants talked about their Samoan fathers and mothers acting as mentors.

Some of the participants were assigned community mentors for the duration of their course. These people gave the participants good advice and support. Some of the participants expressed the wish for this mentoring to continue into their first years of work. The participants still felt that they required guidance and encouragement over an extended period of time.

The tutors of transitional courses

Many researchers in the field of teacher effectiveness concur (Bishop & Berryman, 2005, Palmer, 1998) that teacher relationships with students is a critical component of student motivation. They argue that the essence of teaching is encapsulated in the essence of relationships between teachers and students. Relational teaching practices enhance student learning and build, maintain and preserve meaningful, sincere

relationships with students (Palmer, 1998). All participants expressed the importance of forming meaningful relationship with tutors. It was this relationship that was a key determinant in motivating the participants to achieve course goals.

Most of the participants discussed good tutors as tutors who cared for you and whom you could ring at anytime if you needed help. Some tutors took them to their homes to make the participants feel part of their own families. The participants responses indicated that forming relationships with tutors was important to them as learners and that those relationships grew out of mutual respect.

Deeper analysis of student comments revealed that being valued as individuals, having a sense of belonging, and experiencing mutual respect was seen as significant to being successful in the course/courses. The findings of this research support Kaupapa Maori teaching pedagogy research which has long recognised the positive effects of relational teaching (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This is also supported by many recent studies in this area (Hattie, 2002; Hawk, Cowley, Hill & Sutherland, 2002).

From the participant statements, it is clear that teachers play an important role in enhancing the students' active participation in class. When the participants talked about good teaching they saw the teacher as someone who encouraged, guided, mentored and organized learning for them. Teachers' validation and praising of students motivated them to want to achieve goals. There was a relaxed atmosphere, which decreased student anxiety and they were willing to speak-up in classroom discussions.

There has been a great deal of research on the concept of teaching. Proseer and Trigwell (1998) distinguish basically two concepts about teaching which are teacher-focused and student-focused. The participants when talking about teachers they perceived as being 'poor teachers' were referring to those teachers who implemented teacher-focused strategies, which are transmission theories of teaching. These teachers view teaching as the delivery of knowledge that needs to be transmitted from expert teacher to inexperienced learner. The focus is on what the teacher does (Proseer & Trigwell, 1998).

The participants when talking about 'good teachers' viewed these teachers as teachers who utilised student-focussed strategies. These teachers respect a student's prior

knowledge and focused on bringing about conceptual change in student's understanding of the world. Poor teachers according to the participants did not make learning interesting or relevant. Good teachers invited students to participate in authentic, meaningful and relevant activities.

Some teachers did not take into account cultural diversity of the students and they felt did not respect their cultures. The good teachers were culturally responsive teachers. According to Fullan (2001) culturally responsive teachers see their roles in terms of socio-political responsibility. They see teaching as a moral activity concerned with social justices rather than reproducing current inequalities. Where the tutors were culturally responsive, the participants felt culturally safe to learn.

In this study some participants talked positively about a tutor being a Samoan male. They felt the tutor because of his culture and language could interact more deeply with them. He was also a role model and this motivated them to achieve their goals. However this tutor also demonstrated characteristics of an effective teacher (as found in Hattie's (2002), research on teaching). For the participants it was also important for the tutors to have experienced some of the barriers to learning as they had experienced in their lives, however again they had to have all the other qualities that made them effective teachers.

Curriculum content

As already discussed in the Chapter Three of this study Little (1998) identifies four factors that should be part of transition curriculum design; Competence, Connection Character and Confidence. The programme should support the young person to improve and to show competence in areas such as literacy, employment and interpersonal skills. Strong connections need to be established by the teacher, learning experiences need to help students build quality relationships and the learning experiences should incorporate team building programmes that explore character development. Programmes should help the young person to develop a sense of integrity and to share a sense of caring of others. Confidence building experiences that develop self-esteem and self efficacy support youth to achieve goals (as cited in Blum, 1998b). In this section the content of the courses will be further discussed in relation to Little's research and a new focus on reflective writing and health and fitness as an important aspect of transition curriculum will be discussed.

The curriculum content of the transition courses either inspired the participants to engage with the learning experiences or to disengage. The participants mostly enjoyed the curriculum offered in the courses. This was due to the learning experiences being more purposeful, more authentic and more meaningful. They could see the clear links from curriculum goals to the world of work. This, motivated participants to more fully engaged in the learning experiences than when they were at secondary school.

Culture recognised in the courses

Where participants had opportunities to discuss their Samoan culture in relation to how they learn, they felt their backgrounds and cultures were honoured and recognised. They felt culturally safe and knew there was an understanding by the tutors about who they were and what cultural identity meant to them. At times they felt that some tutors did not recognise or value their culture and they felt patronised.

Writing reflectively

All participants felt very positive about writing reflectively. Some did not enjoy writing at school and were reluctant to write. The reflective writing opportunities built confidence in the participants as writers. Reflective writing helped the students to pause, consider and critically reflect on their learning. Writing researcher Harry Hood states: “Words empower us. They enable us to define reality or create it” (cited in Ministry of Education, *Dancing with a Pen* 1992.) Reflective writing enables us to retell our experiences and elaborate on what we are thinking about.

Reflective writing helped the participants to explore their experiences and thoughts. It enabled them to enlarge on their lives, and discover the meaning of their experiences. Writing enabled the participants to develop a greater realisation of themselves. It enabled them to share personal interpretations of events and ideas with other course members. Another key reason for incorporating personal reflective writing is that it supports reading progression. For reluctant readers writing can be a key motivator in improving literacy levels (Clay, 1991).

Health and physical education content

When transition courses incorporated health and fitness activities, participants were highly positive about the inclusion of this learning area. The participants began to see the importance of keeping themselves fit and healthy in order to be successful in their

work and personal life. The participants discussed these learning experiences as being highly motivational, especially when they worked out in the gym. Most participants had not been gym members and they enjoyed the gym experience. As Pasifika youth they valued this health and fitness teaching, because they wanted to set themselves patterns of positive behaviours that would put them at a lower risk level of serious health problems. They were well aware of the alarming health statistics of Pasifika people.

If our transition programmes for youth are based on the principles of resilience theory, they must include health and physical education components. Students of lower socio-economic backgrounds need to be supported to strive to keep themselves healthy through adopting a lifestyle that is focused on physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. This then might eliminate some of the depression minority group's face when they are in adulthood (Block & Shedler, 2001) which has already been discussed previously in the literature review.

The participants understood the links of being healthy and fit with emotional well-being. There was evidence that some courses covered Maori elements for ensuring good emotional health. In the analysis of curriculum content participants made references to their deeper understanding of *te taha hinengaro* (emotional and mental health), *te taha whanau* (connections to family) *te taha wairua* (spiritual health) and *te taha tinana* (physical health) (Durie, 1999).

In many transition courses the main curriculum content is based around literacy, numeracy, communication and employment skills. This research suggests that for transition courses to be effective for young people they need to include a health and well-being strand as part of the content.

Other positive aspects of the course content

Researching, computing, and debating.

Participants were positive about having to undertake research about their work preferences. This enabled the participants to gain a greater informed knowledge about their work choices. Some of the participants discussed that they were required to present their research as a power-point document. The participants gained confidence in front of a group of peers and industry personnel would give feedback about their

presentations. Computer skills were contextualised in new learning experiences, for example; learning to put together power point presentations. Computer skills were not taught in isolation. This approach made the learning meaningful and purposeful.

All participants in the courses talked about lacking in confidence in particular speaking in front a group. Some participants commented on being part of debating teams where they had to put together a case to support their arguments. They found debating experiences valuable.

Strengths based curriculum

The participants reported variable experiences regarding whether the course enabled them to further develop their strengths. It is evident in this research that the participants progressed more readily if their strengths were firstly developed and then they could confidently focus on areas of need. Where tutors capitalised on the participants' strengths, this motivated students to engage more deeply in the course activities. The findings support the comments of Pianta and Walsh (1998) where they believe that we need to capitalise more on our students' strengths. When the participants' strengths were emphasised the youth felt that they were empowered to utilise their strengths to overcome barriers to learning. When participants were seen by tutors as part of the solution and not the problem (Blum, 1998), participants responded more positively to the new learning introduced.

Field trips and work placements

All participants were very positive about the field trips they undertook. There were two types of field trips, those where visits were industry-related and other trips that broadened their life experiences. The industry-related visits gave the participants a taste of what a particular industry would be like to work in. Most participants found talking to the industry managers helpful and informative. Most of these employers took a keen interest in the youth, there were only a few who did not fully engage with the participants and did not communicate effectively.

Field trips to sports-related industries inspired students to work on keeping fit and healthy and provided students with possibilities of working in their industry in the future. Here they met some elite Samoan sportspeople who inspired the youth to achieve the life goals. Participants also particularly enjoyed and felt highly motivated

by visiting Samoan males who had successful careers in work such as law, tourism and education.

Participants highlighted in their discussions how they found field trips to other parts of Auckland very worthwhile. Trips over the bridge to visit places of interest on the North Shore and other central city landmarks such as the Auckland Museum broadened their experiences. Beaches and bush walks helped them develop a sense of spiritual renewal. At times in some of the courses the participants had to find their own way to various destinations in other parts of Auckland. This was to reinforce that they could catch buses to work in other parts of Auckland, to go where the work is and not only seek opportunities for work in South Auckland.

All participants found their work placement experiences rewarding and valuable, even the participant who did not get the placement he was hoping for. Some of the participants went on to work for these companies when they had completed the courses, although they are yet to be given apprenticeship opportunities.

Negative aspects of the course content

In the study participants discussed some of the curriculum content that they felt was not useful to them. Some of the participants were withdrawn from class to be tutored by teacher-aides to help them improve their reading scores. One participant reported that he felt that the teacher-aide did not know what she was doing. The activities were demeaning and he knew that his reading did not improve. The assistance given was not beneficial for him.

Participants felt at times that some tutors gave them worksheet activities that were at low levels, almost at a primary school level. This was particularly noticeable with the mathematics exercises. They were very basic and the tutors did not take into account that there were participants in their classes that had achieved NCEA Level 1 and Level 2 mathematics.

From these participant's comments it is obvious that some of the course tutors and tutor-aides were not knowledgeable of how to teach literacy and numeracy to adult learners or knew very little about literacy and numeracy teaching theories. The positive

aspect of literacy teaching was the reflective writing journals. More use of students' personal writing to enhance participant's reading ages is a valid approach (Clay, 1995).

Transference and sustainability

In this section there will be a discussion of what the participants believed were the important aspects of their course learning that they could transfer to their work context. There were three main areas; their values, beliefs and philosophies, effective personal strategies and group strategies, and valuable aspects of course content that they utilised at work.

The course enabled the participants to explore their own value base and work out what was important to them. There were activities where they had to prepare their philosophy and defend their philosophies in a debating forum. As mentioned in previous sections of this discussion of findings, the participants valued the personal growth aspects of the courses and felt because they knew more about themselves that this has helped them at work.

There were specific personal strategies that they could transfer to work. Time management strategies, where they had to plan their daily priorities, presenting appropriately at interviews and a newly found confidence enabled them to be better prepared for their new working environments. Two of the participants are now in leadership roles and they felt that looking at leadership styles and good leadership qualities enabled them to effectively lead others in the workplace.

Working as part of a team in the course enabled participants to work effectively with workmates at work. One participant talked about being a better listener and other participants talked about being better able to read body language so they could be more sensitive to others.

Current work realities

Overall the participants were very positive about their transition courses, and all except one participant are employed. However at the time of the research no participant has managed to be placed in a modern apprenticeship scheme. They all still dream that one day this will happen. Out of the eight participants, six are working in places where other young apprentices are employed. They are often doing the work of the

apprentices and are gaining knowledge in the particular area but none are on their way to achieving a qualification.

This current reality supports Tannock's (2000) findings. He believes that youth floundering may be exacerbated at work because they face prejudicial and short-sighted practices from employers. Although the transition courses did prepare youth to be prepared for some barriers that they may face at work, they did not prepare them for the disappointment of attending transition courses and then finding out that there were very few, if any, offers for students to be employed as apprentices. This was and still is a shocking revelation. The findings in this study support the data from the Ministry of Social Development report (2006) where it states that Maori and Pasifika young people in New Zealand face prejudices when trying to find apprenticeship placements. There is a wide gap that still exists in the number of modern apprenticeships available to Maori and Pasifika students compared to young Pakeha.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

In this chapter, after briefly summarising the research findings, the strengths and limitations of the study are discussed. The implications of the findings for this research are proposed as recommendations. Potential future research topics will be suggested, followed by my final reflections of the study.

Summary of findings

Community partnerships should be utilised to build local support networks to implement the care and transition of school leavers, to ensure that young people will contribute effectively as citizens of this nation in the future. This research study reflects on whether Samoan male school leavers have benefited from their participation in transition courses to support them in sustainable work contexts.

Evidence from the findings reveals that these South Auckland youth identify with multiple identities through social-cultural and politically constructed lenses. Their life choices at this stage of their journey are made for different reasons compared to Pakeha youth in Vaughan's (1999) study that concludes that youth go through a period of *milling and churning*. Samoan youth work to support their families and at this stage dream of becoming mechanics, electricians, panel-beaters and policemen.

The participants generally reported positive experiences about the transition courses. They felt more positive about their involvement in transition courses compared to those at secondary school. The participants viewed the learning they experienced during the transition courses as more relevant and purposeful.

The participants all experienced personal growth. They gained confidence and developed reflective strategies that enabled them to continue to focus and meet their

learning goals they had set for themselves. The course/courses helped participants to develop greater inner strength and supported them to become more resilient. Team cohesion supported group efficacy.

The positive aspects of course content that engaged the participants were learning experiences such as reflective writing, health and fitness activities, debating and researching their preferred work area. Field trips that enabled them to learn more about industry sectors and also field trips that broadened their life experiences were highly valued by the participants. The negative aspects of the course content included; completing low level mathematics and literacy activities and at times not having their prior knowledge recognised and their strengths utilised.

The tutors either made a positive difference or impacted negatively on the participants' motivation to learn. Where tutors were relational in their approach, the participants felt valued, their strengths were recognised and their culture was respected. When the participants received consistent encouragement and a degree of challenge, they were inspired to learn. However during their transition courses they also experienced tutors that they felt did not care for them and did not make learning interesting.

The participants on the whole felt that they had met their course goals. The strategies developed during the courses could be transferred to their work context. However the participants' current realities reveal that all except one participant, who is currently unemployed, and one participant who works in an office environment all other participants work as low- skilled labourers.

As already discussed in Chapter Three an international review of literature on effective transition programmes from a number of countries, identified six key factors. These were; a healthy economy, well organised pathways, wide spread opportunities that combined studies with workplace experience, tight knit safety nets for at risk students, good information and guidance and effective institutions and processes (Boyd & McDowall, 2004). In this study on the whole, the youth experienced effective transition courses but when exiting the courses have not yet fulfilled their aspirations and dreams of gaining apprenticeship placements.

The strengths and limitations

A number of strengths can be identified in this research. They are as follows:

- Appropriateness of the methodology. The intimate reflection of each participant's approach to learning reveals a complexity that is best shown through case study methodology. The present study provides insights into the influences that may not be included in large-scale research designs. In particular, using a case study approach and interview techniques, participants thoughts were captured at an individual level. The findings serve to highlight the importance of exploring beyond broad categories often used to cluster participants.
- The exploration has identified positive factors that have supported Samoan youth in transition and this study has offered constructive suggestion of ongoing improvement of transitional experiences in relation to students' cultures.
- Significant contribution to New Zealand literature of Samoan males' perceptions of their transition journeys
- Opportunity for Samoan voices to be heard and furthermore to validate their experiences.
- Conducting research in a manner that provides hope for positive practice, rather than just articulating problems associated with Pasifika Youth transition.
- The impact of the research process on my personal and professional learning and understanding that impacts on my daily work.

A number of limitations can be identified in this research. They are as follows:

- The case study approach in this design is that data is being collected from only eight participants. Kelder and associates believe that by

combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this adds depth and breadth to a study by allowing a wider range of information to be collected and therefore more comprehensive findings may emerge (Kelder et al., 1994).

- A limitation of the selected methodology is that it's an 'instance in action' and not a longitudinal design. Therefore some of the participants could possibly be unsuccessful workers or even drop from the researcher's radar in the future.
- More time to revisit the participants to gain more data in order to gain even a greater insight into their aspirations.

Implications for Research

This research has added to the body of research on transition, with a particular emphasis on hearing the voices of Samoan male youth. The findings will assist course designers and policy makers to provide courses that better meet students' strengths and needs in transition. Based on the findings of the study, the implications of the findings will be discussed as broad recommendations.

The recommendations are as follows:

That Pasifika youth are supported through transition programmes and government policy to continue to build levels of resilience.

This research study has identified the need to ensure that Pasifika Youth have planned pathways that support and develop youth resilience. Pasifika youth are over represented in negative statistics (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). This impacts on their future lives as outlined in Withers and Russell's (2004) research. These researchers describe a 'risk continuum' with those who are more at risk being more likely to experience multiple negative future events. These include negative events related to transition such as early school leaving, but also events related to risk factors in the individual, the school, the family or the community (cited in Boyd and McDowall, 2004).

It is important for Pasifika youth to build resilience in the workplace to overcome the barriers they may face. This then might eliminate some of the depression minority

groups' face when they are in adulthood, which has already been discussed previously in Jack Block's findings (2001).

As this area of resilience research is still evolving there still needs to be a greater discussion around sociological issues that affect youth development, for example, racism, sexism, class and poverty. Although perhaps we all have an innate resilience gene, there are environmental and societal factors that influence our lives through our adulthood stages. An example of this already discussed in this study is the extremely low percentages of Pasifika youth in Modern Apprenticeships.

That Pasifika youth are provided with on-going mentoring in their early years of work

Pasifika youth in this study experienced informal mentoring either by tutors or other community members during the course time. This did not continue for most participants at work. The participants felt they would have benefited greatly from the on-going mentoring and advice. This ongoing planned mentoring is vital to maximise achievement success for Pasifika youth.

That transition course content is culturally inclusive

Evidence suggests from this research that participants felt at home, safe and secure when their culture was recognised and valued, and that culture identity was discussed within the course content. Where the environment was culturally safe they better engaged with learning.

That transition courses are relevant, and meaningful

Building team strategies, developing a greater level of self knowledge, learning about being responsible for one's health and engaging in productive writing experiences contributed to the learning being relevant and meaningful. This research will assist other transition educators to reflect on the findings of this study when designing transition courses in the future.

To further elaborate on why it is essential to include health and well-being as a topic in transition courses, is that this research has clearly demonstrated the need for youth to be healthy to support them to be better prepared for the workplace. As adolescents from socio-economic groups are less likely to be as healthy as from middle class peers, it is important that transition content does not ignore this vital learning area. Transition

courses need to design interventions to prevent health risk behaviours and promote health.

This research has demonstrated the need to focus on supporting students to develop strategies that can keep them emotionally healthy. As evidenced in the transcripts participants have encountered racism in their lives and in their current working situations. Eisler and Hersin (2000) believe racism impacts on peoples' health in two ways; the limited access to health services and the affects of racism causes personal and psychological suffering. The participants were empowered by discussing these issues during course time and found that the strategies they had learned gave them tools to overcome some of these barriers.

As evidenced in the transcripts, reflective writing empowered the students to gain a greater confidence about themselves as writers. It is vital that reflective writing is included in course content as it is a powerful tool to further develop literacy levels.

Field trips should be used to enrich the learning experiences of young lives and connect in-class learning with relevant work experiences.

That tertiary tutors/tutor assistants who teach transition courses have a greater understanding of literacy and numeracy learning.

There was evidence in the data that tutor/ tutor assistants did not have an in-depth understanding of adult literacy and adult numeracy teaching. To further enhance the literacy and numeracy learning for Pasifika students there needs to be a review of how literacy and numeracy is taught within transition courses and steps taken to improve the delivery.

That the government provides greater equity opportunities in the workplace, to ensure Pasifika youths' transition goals can become reality in their working lives.

According to a Ministry of Social Development report, (2006), there is a wide gap that exists in the number of modern apprenticeships available to Maori and Pasifika students, compared to the opportunities for Pakeha young people. These findings are supported by the findings of this study. The recommendations of this study will be disseminated to policy makers to ensure that these matters for Pasifika youth are

addressed so that at the next New Zealand census Pasifika youth will be part of more positive statistics.

All youth in New Zealand need to look forward to a promising future where they can achieve economic stability. Government policies need to ensure that Pasifika youth participate successfully in the workplace and create the necessary initiatives that will achieve this. An example of this would be to create apprenticeship placements in the private sector.

That government policy and the implementation of policy creates an inclusive economy for all New Zealanders

For the recent newly defeated and the recent newly elected government their policies reflect a rhetoric about implementing an inclusive economy that benefits all. What is an inclusive economy? An inclusive economy evolves from the inter-relationships between social capability, productive capability and well-being. A group or individual's well-being is determined by their ability to participate in the economy through employment (Ministry of Social Development, 2006).

If the New Zealand government believes in the principles of inclusion how do they ensure that all groups in that society fully participate? When individuals or groups face barriers to participation, how does the government ensure that these barriers are overcome (Ministry of Social Development, 2006).

One urgent priority that the newly appointed government needs to face is to continue to offer educational opportunities at a tertiary level but continue these opportunities into the workplace. Samoan youth that participated in this study need to be given opportunities now so they can become highly skilled contributors of an inclusive economy.

Areas of further research

It is my hope that other researchers will draw upon, and extend my findings into other areas of transition research for Pasifika youth. Should a broad range of methodologies be applied to this area of study, it may well be that our understanding of complexity and intricacy of positive factors influencing transition will be better understood by policy makers.

Future Research Recommendations are;

Longitudinal studies on Pasifika youth.

When we talk about resilience as being innate, we need more longitudinal studies to look at how youth have been resilient into middle age. Resilient youth also can choose pathways that lead to crime. This also needs to be investigated in relation to resilient theory and a challenge to resilient theorists. Jack Block's (2002) research also concluded that black adolescents had lower levels of drug and alcohol as well as lower rates of depressions from white youth. However, patterns reversed during adulthood. Resilience theory according to Block can be somewhat naive in a complex world.

Literacy and numeracy teaching in transition programmes

In-depth research is required to discuss the current reality of literacy and numeracy teaching in transition courses.

Further research of what constitutes meaningful and relevant course content for transition courses

To further support the findings of this research more research studies are required to give a greater picture of course content and delivery in New Zealand.

Best teaching practice of Pasifika Youth in transition

In-depth research on best teaching practice is required to ensure Pasifika students achieve the desired outcomes during transition to set them up for success in the work context.

Conclusion

I often meet with other Samoans who say that we must strive to become part of the middle or upper class of New Zealand society. I know this is where political and social power lies, and we need to be there. However I have some tensions surrounding this concept, although my children live a middle class life. As educators and policy makers it is critical now that we look globally to sustain the earth's natural resources, to ensure our grandchildren inherit a healthy environment to live in, where they are not driven individually to look after themselves, but will work collaboratively with all cultures and societies to leave a better place for their own children. Youth need to be motivated so they can develop the skills and assets, necessary to prepare for the coming years of change through a sense of positive empowerment and personal conviction, in order for

them to optimise the capacity to make healthy and safe decisions about themselves and their children's lives.

Indigenous peoples need to lead the world in traditional and modern endeavours, to use traditional and new knowledge to build a sustainable future for all.

Upon publishing the findings of this research and the story of my research experience, I intend to further my research activity through in-depth doctoral studies.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

28 April 2008

Project Title

Supporting Youth for Work in NZ: A case study of the Samoan experience

An Invitation

Talofa lava. My name is Bruce Tasi. I am an enrolled Masters student at the Auckland University of Technology, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project, that will be part of my thesis in 2008. I am an active member of the Samoan community in Auckland. You are invited to participate in this project because you are Samoan and aged between 18 and 20 years and have recently completed a transitional education programme. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Until all the interviews are completed, you have the right to withdraw for any reason, and the information collected will be withdrawn from the study. The period that you can withdraw your information is approximately 2 months from the time of the interview. The outcome of the research is my Masters thesis. I am also planning to publish and present the research at conferences.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this project is to understand and reflect on the personal experiences of Samoan youth. It explores how young people cope with the transitional courses you have just completed. Exploring views of the journey to work will help educators to better understand the needs of Samoan youth preparing for the workplace.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

You were recruited through personal contacts involved in transition education. These people gave me your contact details so that I could invite you to participate in the research. Participation is voluntary. Your participation in this research will include two research stages. The first stage involves an in-depth taped (audio) interview, at a venue of your choice. The second stage of the research will involve a follow-up interview, with a typed transcript of the first interview, which will require your signed approval of information taken. It is anticipated that each stage should take no more than 1 hour.

What will happen in this research?

Your involvement in the research may help educators involved in transition education to design programmes that better respond to what Samoan youth need. A research thesis will be produced and papers and presentations on the project will also be produced.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no obvious risks and discomforts.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

It is highly unlikely that any discomforts will occur as part of the research process.

What are the benefits?

The findings from the research may help transition educators to design programmes that better respond to what Samoan youth need.

How will my privacy be protected?

I would like to assure you that anything you say during the proposed interviews will remain confidential. When the reports from the research are compiled your responses will be grouped with other members who will also have been interviewed and it will be impossible to identify any of the participants.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs to you apart from your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

If you want to participate please let me know within a reasonable time – preferably within two weeks.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You will need to complete a Consent Form which I will give to you before the interview begins.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, you will receive a report when the research is completed. This will be posted to you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Hinematau McNeill, hinematau.mcneill@aut.ac.nz ph 09 9219999 ext 6077.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Bruce Tasi **DDI:** 093659306 **FAX:** 092622150 **EMAIL:** bruce.tasi@tec.govt.nz

Postal address: Private Bag 76-928 S.A.M.C., Manukau City

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2008, AUTEK Reference number 08/101.

Consent Form



Project title: Supporting Youth for Work in NZ: A case study of the Samoan experience

Project Supervisor: Dr Hinematau McNeill

Researcher: Bruce Siumanaia Tasi

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 28 April 2008.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

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Participant's name:

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Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2008. ATEC Reference number 08/101