

**Alternative Education:
Literature Review and Report on Key Informants'
Experiences**

Report to the Ministry of Education.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aims of this study were fourfold: to determine the indicators of successful alternative education programmes/providers, consider the hallmarks of quality, and successful outcome, as well as to investigate the experiences of principals/schools with different providers. This report combines the results of a literature review documenting quality indicators, as well as an exploratory study.

Under the alternative education policy, the Ministry of Education provides funding for education programmes for young people, aged 13 to 15 years, who have become alienated from school. The criteria for young people being placed on an alternative education programme include that the young person has:

- being out of school for two terms or more;
- multiple exclusions (urban – more an one school, rural plus other factors);
- a history of dropping out of mainstream schooling after being reintegrated;
- dropped out of the Correspondence School after enrolment as an 'A Risk Student'.

The project was conducted in three areas of New Zealand: a North Island city, a provincial town and a South Island city. The study design included conducting three initial focus groups, as well as a more generalised telephone survey. Initially a literature review was used to inform themes in alternative education provision. These were developed into a schedule of enquiry areas for focus group discussion. Participants in these groups were representative of Alternative Education Consortium Providers. They were invited to share their views regarding effective provision of alternative education programmes. The three focus groups were held across the localities indicated above. A list of quality indicators was developed from these groups which formed the basis of a telephone survey. This extended generalisation of the focus group data, by telephone interviewing a wider audience in the same geographic areas.

The results of the study strongly reflected the international review of literature. Alternative education for alienated students is seen as the response to a global problem, that the system of public education is failing to meet the challenge of demographic and social change, and children are unprepared for the workplace (Glasser, 1992). Provision to meet the needs of these students has frequently developed out of community initiatives which are responsive to specific local requirements, any attempts at standardisation are seen as counter to effective programmes.

The major question posed by the study was, what do effective worthwhile programmes look like? Although complex, consensus was reached by most providers that there are five areas associated with effective provision. These areas also confirmed in the research literature are:

- 1 The place where the programme operates**
- 2 The students**
- 3 The students' families**
- 4 The programme curriculum**
- 5 The programme providers**

Each of these aspects are now summarised below:

1. The place where the programme operates

Quality programmes need to be in compact settings that are unlike school. They may be conducted indoors or out, and students feel a sense of programme ownership because in the small group their voice is heard. A sense of emotional security is engendered, and their personal interests are reflected in the programme and the room décor. These features encourage improved attendance and socially acceptable behaviour that are at the basis of effective alternative education programmes.

2. The students

The students are supported to make a commitment to the programme, and an attempt is made in quality provision to value students' achievements and recognise the difficulties of the adolescent life-stage, by encouraging peer support, and conditions to promote self esteem.

3. The students' families

Students' families are perceived as very important in terms of reinforcing the programme at home and partnership with programme providers. Whilst family disruption may also be contributory to student failure, the importance of trying to build a relationship with the family for the benefits which can accrue is a first priority for alternative educators.

4. The programme curriculum

Effective alternative programmes offer more individualised curriculum support than the mainstream. They deliver literacy, numeracy and other areas of content knowledge, as information required by students in real life situations in order to maximise learning opportunities rather than presentation in "subject packages." Diagnostic assessment is important to provide guidance in planning individualised programmes.

5. The programme providers

There is a team of providers, which is most effective when it operates collaboratively, providing support for team members as well as for students. Team members are involved in a multidisciplinary approach of providing health, educational, social and emotional support for students. Alternative educators need to develop warm relationships with their students, as well as helping them with basic life needs. There is evidence to suggest that initial recruitment for the role is often on personal attributes that need to be promptly supported by appropriate training in behaviour management, counselling and special needs. The importance of having trained teachers who have a professional approach to education must be emphasised. However it is recommended that pre-service teacher training is supplemented by specialist courses.

The following is a list of indicators using the above categories, which describe the main components of quality provision in more detail. These were developed as a result of the accumulation of information from Focus Groups and verified in the Telephone Survey.

QUALITY INDICATORS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES WHAT DOES A QUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME LOOK LIKE?

Quality education programmes have characteristics that can be described according to the following aspects:

- 1 The place where the programme operates**
- 2 The students**
- 3 The students' families**
- 4 The programme curriculum**
- 5 The programme providers**

1 The place where the programme operates:

“very important”

- is welcoming and emotionally safe with social barriers removed.
- has clear guidelines and organisational structures which are adhered to.

“important”

- gives students choice, and ownership.
- is unlike school, informal, and "like home."
- has well distributed, and equitable funding for resources.

2 The students in the programme:

“very important”

- maintain attendance and commitment to the programme
- have their achievements and success valued which boosts self-esteem.

“important”

- are viewed as individuals, but at the complex lifestage of adolescence with peer group issues and social relationships requiring support.
- who have been offending have these incidents and convictions noticeably reduced.

1. The students' families:

“very important”

- receive modelling behaviour from staff which values students' endeavours, as well as newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.
- Have a partnership with providers to support the student, and reinforce and enhance learning.

“important”

- whatever their structure or circumstances enjoy a relationship with programme providers.
- receive support by identification and communication with a key member.
- are themselves benefiting from the programme by learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.

2. The programme curriculum:

“very important”

- ensures that a hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed so that students are ready to learn.
- uses diagnostic assessment to plan programmes that set individual realistic goals, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended.
- includes a range of supporting subjects that integrate literacy and numeracy. Examples include: lifeskills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication

skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym, and sports.

- uses informal group teaching methods with reduced social barriers.
- uses very small groupings of students, and individual attention.
- is flexible, proceeding at a slower pace, with timetables that allow immediate dealing with problems, informal discussion.
- ensures activities are varied, and changing constantly both outdoor and indoor, using management school, community and, regional facilities in order that
- students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
- there are routines, and secure boundaries with regard to the structure of the day
- ensures cultural issues are addressed, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
- ensures safety management procedures are followed.

“important”

- ensures literacy and numeracy, are crucial aspects, taught in authentic contexts.
- includes challenging activities which build success and confidence, and help students take ownership, particularly regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools for team work.
- ensures there are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce.

5. The providers of the programme:

“very important”

- are well supported by principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid professionals), such that a network of colleagues, is in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- are a team with different roles comprising trained teachers supported by alternative educators (members of the particular community who are student mentors and role models).
- have close, warm, supportive, relationships with students as well as advocating for them.

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- are well supported by principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid professionals), such that a network of colleagues, is in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- are a team with different roles comprising trained teachers supported by alternative educators (members of the particular community who are student mentors and role models).
- have close, warm, supportive, relationships with students as well as advocating for them.
- are ideally not only trained teachers but have extra curricular training because their teaching role is qualitatively different on a daily basis. This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counselling, and behaviour management.
- will all have effective self management skills, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.

“important”

- are trained teachers, their role being providing pedagogical and curriculum expertise, professional supervision, and advisory expertise.
- are not all trained teachers. They are tutors/alternative educators. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. (These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with wayward youth. In quality programmes they will be inservice trained for their particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.
- will ensure specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes are supported by regular staff in their delivery to ensure safety and behaviour management support.
- ensure the male female gender mix of staff fits group needs.
- expect continued Government policy support and recognition of their work in pay parity with secondary teacher salaries, where qualifications match.

In summary, quality education programmes need to be entirely attuned to the individual student, by an immediate assessment of needs, and a supportive environment that will re-engage the student with learning. Whilst alternative education programmes should be accountable and afford the very highest level of professionalism, they cannot be standardised. This would run counter to meeting the criteria laid down by the quality indicators.

Abstract

This report contains two aspects; firstly a review of literature on the characteristics of quality alternative education programmes. Under the alternative education policy, the Ministry of Education provides funding for education programmes for young people, aged 13 to 15 years, who have become alienated from school. Alienation has to do with neither the young person nor the school(s) being willing to have that young person attending a regular school setting. The young person has:

- been out of school for two terms or more;
- multiple exclusions (urban – more than one school, rural one plus other factors);
- a history of dropping out of mainstream schooling after being reintegrated;
- dropped out of the Correspondence School after enrolment as an 'At Risk Student'.

The report looks at aspects of these programmes that relate to success within a range of contexts. Secondly there is report on information from key informants working in alternative education provision. Key informant interviews conducted across a series of focus groups culminated through the coding of transcribed discussion into a list of quality indicators for the development and implementation of alternative education programme. The indicators were then verified through a telephone survey administered to a wider audience of New Zealand alternative education providers. The areas covered by the quality indicators relate to the following categories and characteristics of the programme; students; curriculum; providers; and families. The indicators were in keeping with the major themes outlined in the review of literature that covered both national and international perspectives and trends associated with the development of alternative education programmes.

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Section One: Introduction

1.1.1 Aims and overview of study

Previous research indicated that the school based alternative education programmes funded by the Ministry of Education for students who have become alienated from the education system were characterised by small classes; intensive staffing; alternatives to formal curriculum activities; student groupings that lead to shared problem solving as well as gender and ethnic matches between teachers and students (National Research Bureau, 2000, a). A further study in 2000 (National Research Bureau, 2000, b) looking at the outcomes of alternative education programmes indicated that they provided “an environment for learning where the students feel markedly more comfortable and more willing to attempt the reconnection to learning” (p 4). Both of these studies indicated that having alternative education opportunities available for students who had opted out of the mainstream educational system was a positive initiative. With this background and in response to the call by the Ministry of Education for proposals to identify indicators of good practice by providers of alternative education programmes the following study was undertaken. The study consisted of two parts, the first being that of a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and the second the conducting of a series of key informant interviews. Prior to identifying the aims of the study how alternative education provision is organised is outlined as a means of setting the parameters of the study.

The alternative education programme model funded by the Ministry of Education has a managing school, which has a manager or co-ordinator, who is collaboratively responsible for a “cluster” of schools in the immediate area, known as a “consortium”. The manager can be the principal of the school or a nominated staff member. The consortium group then has providers who deliver the alternative education programmes. Alternative education provision can range from a school-based programme set within a segregated unit; a community based programme; or where the provider, such as a local employer, provides an individual alternative educational placement for a young person. The staff of the alternative education programmes can consist of trained teachers, community and youth workers.

Within this context alternative education providers are referred to variously as teachers; alternative educators; tutors; and or trainers. Within the study the word teacher will be used to differentiate those staff who hold teacher training qualifications from those personnel who have a community orientation background. This group within the study will be referred to as alternative programme educators.

The overall aims of the study were to:

- Identify what features constitute successful outcomes of alternative education programmes.

- Develop a set of indicators for those outcomes identified as indices of success for alternative education.

Specifically the study aimed to:

- Identify from a review of the literature the predictors of both successful and quality outcomes for alternative education programmes.
- Identify the perceptions and experiences of consortium staff as well as that of alternative education providers as to what is viewed as successful in meeting the needs of students who have no potential for re-integration back into the mainstream setting.
- Incorporate the perceptions of consortium staff as well as associated alternative education providers into the development of a set of quality indicators for alternative education.
- Suggest what needs to be recorded in relation to a student database.

Assessment through outcome based performance measures, adapted as a model for this study.

The Accreditation Council on Services for People with Disabilities (The Accreditation Council, 1993) has developed a series of outcome based performance measures through gaining input from people with disabilities, families, providers and representatives of government and professionals. In turn what they developed was then field tested at a series of sites. The outcome measures for people included the area of personal goals; choice; social inclusion; relationships; rights; dignity and respect; health; environment; security and satisfaction. Similarly a set of outcome measures was developed for the operation of the overall organisation. These included personal health, safety and welfare; fiscal management; human resource management and planning and evaluation. Under each of these headings indices were developed that could in turn be used by evaluators visiting the services. This model was adapted for use within this study with input being sought from the providers of alternative education programmes, although the field-testing was not part of the contracted study.

The study is presented in four sections: In Section One the aims and overview of the study have been presented; in Section 2, Parts 1-5 discuss the national and international literature about characteristics of quality alternative education and “best practice ‘models. Section 3 discusses the findings from a series of focus group and telephone interviews with people currently involved in alternative education programmes in New Zealand; and Section 4 summarises the key themes discussed in the literature and interviews, and identifies some key hallmarks of quality in alternative education.

The methodology chosen for the study combines a series of focus groups, the outcomes of which are verified by a telephone survey. A methodology was sought that would give a cross section of insight into indicators of successful alternative education programmes. In keeping with the time-lines of the study the use of focus groups was adopted where a range of opinion could be gathered from a representative sample of providers across three different geographic areas. The focus group data following coding was then used to develop a series of indicators that were used to collect data within the telephone survey.

Section Two: Review of literature on alternative education

Part 1: Characteristics of quality alternative education

2.1.1 Introduction

This review sets out to present themes and issues, which are relevant to an understanding of quality indicators of alternative education programmes. These are in the context of provision for students who have become alienated from the education system. Alienation has to do with neither the young person nor the school(s) being willing to have them attending a regular school setting (Millbank, 2000).

A school-based alternative education policy has been developed by the Ministry of Education in response to a growing concern about meeting the needs of young people whose intractability has placed them outside the prescription for attendance at a regular school (National Research Bureau, 2000). The initiative has sought to complement existing truancy provisions, by funding a finite number of places to a secondary school, which would then preferably associate with a community group, or provider that had an interest, and the appropriate facilities to respond to students needs. Out of these initiatives has developed a system of programmes with diverse curricula, responsive to individual requirements (Millbank, 2000).

This situation with regards to truancy has in fact directed the focus onto a whole new area of education provision, in order to address present inadequacies. Gerritsen (1999) reports that these initiatives were originally the result of genuine, but ad hoc attempts to address an escalating community problem, which finds ever increasing numbers of secondary school pupils outside mainstream provision, and thus beyond any apparent educational quality control. Reilly and West (1982) argue that these students in the same way, as any others have a right to a quality education. Their needs are even more crucial because not only has the mainstream system not been successful for them, but they have qualitatively more problems in connecting with learning processes than do average students.

Alternative education programmes need to be seen as the response to a global problem. Lovey (1989) records their spectacular growth, the majority for the last two years of compulsory school. Glasser (1992) states that the system of public education is failing to meet the challenge of demographic and societal change, and children are unprepared for the workplace. The National Centre for Education Statistics (1990) recorded that the average dropout rate for students in the United States is 25%, and may even be higher as a national average.

With regard to globalised initiatives providing an environment of learning which will boost the "knowledge economy", Blair (1998) said:

there is a shortage of appropriately skilled labour to develop and exploit the potential, and there is the existence of a socially excluded, so called

underclass of unskilled and disaffected people who are perceived to be both a factor of social destabilization and a drain on society's resources, which still only compensates people for poverty and lack of opportunity, rather than providing solutions (p 2.).

Cisse (2001) argues that for economic and social stability to be created the following areas need to be addressed: poverty, long term unemployment, poor health, homelessness, persistent criminal activity, drug abuse, family breakdown, and teenage pregnancy. This is consistent with concerns in New Zealand, where high rates of adolescent pregnancy and birth are often associated with school disruption and drop-out, resulting in long-term negative consequences for the economic wellbeing of young women and their offspring (Hetherington & Parke, 1990).

These issues concern youth as a whole, but are particularly a concern where students are not even reaching the achievement norms and social expectations of their peers. This is the case where students have been alienated from the mainstream education system (Castelberry & Enger, 1998; Friedrich, 1998). Whilst there is a considerable amount of overseas literature commenting on alternative programmes, there is minimal which relates specifically to initiatives in New Zealand. However, programme quality follows on universal standards (Glasser, 1992).

Gerritsen (1999) has traced an ad hoc development in New Zealand associated with alternative education programmes. Originally these programmes concentrated on pastoral care, presenting a curriculum which was based on social skills, as a response to students' failure to engage with the basic skills of learning in the mainstream curriculum. However, by the 1980s there was a need for a fuller curriculum. This was in response to general educational reform, exemplified by the New Curriculum being disseminated in regular schools. Alternative educators were eager to use the principles of curriculum reform, but were challenged by the need to avoid standardisation in an effort to meet the highly individual needs of their students.

2.1.2 Parameters of the literature search

The brief was to look at alternative programmes for students alienated from mainstream schools, not including non-mainstream programmes offered by secular groups or groups with particular philosophies.

Terminology

To investigate New Zealand and overseas programmes, the literature search started by listing a number of keywords used in the common idiom in New Zealand such as: alternative education programme(s), alternative schooling, borstal, reform school, intervention programme(s) and to describe the students: truant(s) delinquent(s), dropouts, absentee(s) suspended and failed students.

Appropriate descriptors for the programmes were then sought from the ERIC Thesaurus, the Australian thesaurus of Education Descriptors and the British Education Thesaurus and these were: non-traditional education, special programmes, special schools, dropout programmes, high school equivalency programmes and residential schools.

As some of these terms covered programmes and institutions catering for a wider group of people than alienated school students (e.g. “special schools”), it was decided to modify the searches by descriptors used for at risk school age students, in order to limit the search to just school-age youth, rather than a wider group with other special needs. Thus another “OR” search was performed, grouping the descriptors: high risk students OR dropouts, OR truancy OR out of school youth OR special needs students OR student alienation.

Search strategy

The first set of records was searched as an OR search: “non-traditional education OR special programmes, OR special schools OR dropout programmes OR high school equivalency programmes OR residential schools” and this set was modified using “AND” with the second set of terms describing the students: “high risk students OR dropouts OR truancy OR out of school OR special needs students OR student alienation”.

In ERIC because of the large size of the result, this search was again modified to confine it to just the material which represented research, literature reviews or evaluative studies of the programmes, in order to find quality material about the programmes. Thus the set of terms “study OR research OR investigation OR survey or review” were used to refine the search.

In the British Education Index the above search strategy produced only five records, so the strategy was broadened to include the terms “pupil alienation OR disruptive pupils OR suspension OR expulsion in the first set, modified by AND with the second set, “programme Or residential schools or nontraditional education.”

Databases searched and scope of the literature

The databases and catalogues searched were:

The ERIC Database (1992-2000/1) This produced the largest body of literature, with 240 records of official reports, research literature or literature reviews. It was decided to go back only to material with a publication date of 1995 onwards.

Australian Education Index .The above search strategy produced 42 records, of which about 14 were research reports. The terms “early school leaver(s)” were found in the literature and also STAR (Students at Risk) and a further search was done on these terms. This revealed a report which reviewed and described the diverse Australian programmes for under age school leavers, and reports of evaluations of the STAR programme in two states.

British Education Index. The initial search produced only five records, but when the strategy was broadened as described above, it produced 32 records. These included an evaluation of a multiagency behaviour support team (MAST), findings of a National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) study of effectiveness of a range of interventions for disaffected pupils in England and Wales and an assessment of a parent-led alternative to school for children informally excluded from school.

For more **British material** a search of the online database **Education-line** was done to find any further relevant official reports, which only revealed one further NFER report of Alternative Education Provision at Key Stage 4, covering much the same period as the one above.

Index to New Zealand Periodicals. Because of the generalist nature of this database, a number of keywords were used, as well as the search strategy outlined above. The keywords used included alternative education, alternative learning centres borstal, family service units, disadvantaged youth, high risk, and at risk. The references ranged from news articles in newspapers to a review of alternative education programmes in the New Zealand Education Gazette, but no in-depth research reports.

Catalogue of the Auckland College of Education Library. The same range of keywords and terms outlined, limited by AND “New Zealand”, produced several New Zealand government department commissioned reports describing provision for students at risk.

2.1.3 Alternative education defined.

Alternative education is based on the tenet that different individuals learn in different ways (Morley 1991) and that there is no single best approach to education. Young (1990), in describing the characteristics of these programmes, distinguishes alternative schools as providing: a greater responsiveness to a perceived educational need within the community. This means including a more focused instructional programme, a shared sense of purpose, a more student centred philosophy, a non-competitive environment, a greater autonomy, and with the smaller unit a more personalised relationship between students and staff.

Alternative education programmes within Britain were acknowledged at the time of The Elton Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989), and importance was attached to their response to student needs outside the mainstream, but the report regretted the inadequate provision to date. There was a vision to improve this situation that was cost effective, and would support a return for students to the mainstream, if possible. This latter remained a major theme, but more recently there is a sense that most students who require alternative programmes will remain in them until the end of compulsory school. Not the least reason being a transition back to the mainstream is a major trauma, after experiencing a qualitatively different delivery. There is also the idea within this stance, that alternative programmes are “temporary”, “remedial only”, and “second rate,” which

believes their status as an effective independent area of education meeting a particular need. At the same time there is tension that if these programmes are successful students leave them, returning to the mainstream, whereas lack of student success in poor grade programmes determines that they remain in them (DES, 1989). It could be argued that this is unacceptable in terms of quality provision of alternative educational programmes as an altogether different service. The original intent was for students to return to the mainstream of education, after having received temporary remedial and rehabilitative support in programmes. It is now thought that this may not be in the student's best interests. Rather alternative programmes present unique opportunities for students, in presenting a parallel alternative for those who will never achieve well in the mainstream.

Within New Zealand alternative education refers to programmes which are operated as a result of community collaboration. The process is best described within a Ministry of Education documents as follows:

Under the New Zealand alternative education (AE) policy, the Ministry of Education establishes contracts with schools to provide a given number of places for young people, aged 13 to 15 years who have become alienated from the education system. Generally schools work with community partners who provide the alternative education programmes. Alienation has to do with neither the young person nor the school(s) being willing to have them attending a regular school setting. The target group is young people aged 13 to 15 years who are not enrolled in and cannot be re-integrated into a regular school, and schools locally are refusing enrolment and one or more of the following apply.

The young person has:

- been out of school for two terms or more
- multiple exclusions (urban-more than one school, rural one plus other factors)
- a history of dropping out of mainstream schooling after being re-integrated
- dropped out of the Correspondence School after enrolment as an "At Risk Student"

The ideal outcome for these students is to re-enter the education system in a mainstream school. For those who are 15, other positive outcomes would include entering a training programme, or finding a job and joining the workforce. (Ministry of Education, 2001).

2.1.4 Background to alternative education programmes as a concept.

According to Oakland (1992) education has been traditionally viewed by society as a way for adolescents to gain self-sufficiency and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a successful transition into adulthood. Those who do not attain the skills may be severely restrained in an increasingly competitive job market. Adults may spend upwards of 40 years in a work force that requires both males and females to be literate,

technologically aware, and in possession of specialised skills as well as a strong work ethic. In Oakland's view those who do not meet these criteria are likely to have only access to jobs that are lower status or part time. Within this context Oakland then argues that Alternative programmes set out to address the inadequacies for a specific group of students for whom the mainstream has not delivered.

Friedrich (1997) says the concept of alternative education is not new, and provision dates from the inception of public education. Societal trends and accountability currently are in accordance with concerns worldwide about the failure of the public system to meet the needs of all students (Raywid, 1981). Levin (1989a) has made a case for increased funding for educational programmes for at risk students, on decidedly pragmatic grounds. He presents a series of cost benefit analyses which clearly demonstrate that the cost of paying for added educational programmes currently, is still significantly less than the finance associated with public assistance, unemployment benefits, adult education, job training, and judicial system expenses in the future. This is apart from engendering positive outcomes for students personally, and public accountability which are major outcomes. However, it needs to be recognised that this ideology will not just be the result of any haphazard provision. Levin cautions that whilst financial resources are essential for such ventures, this is not the only necessary component for success. Educational interventions, if they are not quality products, have the potential to exacerbate matters, and policies, programmes, and practices should be subjected to close scrutiny. This requires ongoing research of a collaborative nature between funders and providers. At the same time this research inclusive of evaluation and monitoring should be tempered with a focus on the individual needs of particular people at particular sites, in order to ensure a quality outcome.

Civikly (1997) draws attention to the fact that alternative educational settings are predominantly an extension of the mainstream culture (which has already contributed to failure). This is because the content of curricula is the basis of both the personal experience, and training of all teachers and/or providers. It represents, in actuality, a body of knowledge that has a considerable history of research and reform, and embodies an educational approach that is founded on basic life skills. According to Civikly it is not feasible to find an alternative to this curriculum content. Rather, there is a need to investigate ways of imparting this information *differently*, so that literacy and numeracy and other areas of the curriculum seem relevant. This is by educators teaching it in real life situations, in community settings. Thus students, although they were not able to engage with the knowledge as subjects in their mainstream form, their attention will be captured. This is because they have a need to know the information in the context of their personal lives (Glasser, 1992). It is therefore agreed that the need for this content knowledge is common to students both in the mainstream and alternative programmes. The dilemma lies in the fact that teacher courses train teachers for the conditions of the mainstream, which include relating to motivated students, who work independently in large groups. Basic teacher training does not include alternative approaches, which help teachers to key into special learning needs. Teachers are unprepared for the often considerable support required by some students they encounter in their classes. Therefore a hallmark of quality in alternative programmes strongly argued by Civikly is that there

should be a concerted effort to transcribe necessary learning outcomes from conventional delivery, to creative operations which will improve the match between the programme and the student. Importantly, it needs to be recognised that a student, (whilst working in a new focus), still needs extending. Learning outcomes are very necessary, and should not be viewed as no longer attainable, simply because previous conventional programmes did not meet student needs.

Apart from describing the content implications of curriculum for alternative education Civikly (1997) also emphasises that the reasons will vary widely why students are operating in alternative programmes. It should not be immediately assumed that their presence there indicates they were unable to meet the academic component requirements of the conventional school programme. Even if this was the case, their potential may not have been realised due to a lack of “good fit” between student and institution. Whilst initial success in an alternative programme may be measured by such indicators as improved attendance, and social assurance these should not remain the ultimate goals. There is still room for academic, and work skills achievement, and these opportunities should be given. Quality values says Civikly go beyond just textbooks, curriculum, topics and assessment to issues of communication, and disclosure.

2.1.5 What is quality? A definition

This review sets out to evaluate the characteristics of quality alternative educational programmes, as described in the literature. As quality is a construct, like any measurement in the affective domain it will be open to interpretation, according to perspective (Gronlund & Linn, 1985). However there are universals in accordance with need expectations, as defined by empirical research.

Crawford, Bodine and Hogle (1993) do not define quality, but say it is the responsibility of each individual, and that the judgement of quality is situational in learning endeavours. They suggest two questions as criteria by which each individual may judge quality: “Are you doing the best you can do, and are you being the best you can be,” (p xii)?

Reynolds (1987a) suggests several criteria as a combination of definitions of quality. These range through achievement of high academic potential, the generation of pupils with positive social attributes, leadership values, and conscious attention to environmental climate. Some other issues focus on great expectations and jointly planned goals, a sense of shared mission, and consistency throughout the school. Additionally, where quality exists there should be negotiated ways of doing things, a high degree of acceptance, joint planning, positive motivational strategies and feedback on academic performance.

Alternative programmes are difficult to assess by their diverse nature, yet it is this very property of individuality that defines quality. Students are unique in their educational requirements. They are in these alternative programmes, because their individual needs

have not been responded to in the conventionally prescribed programme. The reasons for this are many and varied and relate to the complexities of regular classroom delivery, not least the high ratio of students to staff, diminishing opportunities for those pupils with the greatest need for interaction with the teacher (NCVER, 1999).

2.1.6 Quality provision in alternative education has parallel parameters to that of mainstream excellence.

The criteria for quality provision in alternative education are much the same whether they refer to mainstream or alternative programmes. There is an attempt to define “quality” as education systems around the world currently face the need to respond to quite new challenges (Broadfoot, 1992). There is a need to raise standards overall, and Broadfoot makes the statement that it is no longer socially, economically or politically acceptable to continue with large numbers of the workforce with no formal schooling. She says in any attempt to improve the quality of education there are three main components: the curriculum, the process of teaching and learning, and the structure of qualifications and assessment. This review of literature deals with these aspects of quality education delivery, as well as the nature of the multi-dimensional systems that support alternative provision.

2.1.7 Alternative education programmes.

Firstly, with regard to the programmes themselves. These are many and varied, ranging on a continuum from informal, individual work experience, through to formalised curricula. The latter includes both adaptations to regular school programme content, as well as those that may be commercially marketed. The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) (1999) says it is not that nothing is being done with regard to alternative education. Gaining an adequate assessment of such ventures is fraught with great difficulty because of fragmented disparate provision, which is often provider or area specific. There is also great variety between states and regions in nature and type, worldwide. Typically there are also various government, community and private agencies. This lack of co-ordination makes provision difficult to map.

Shulman (1987) argues that the main hallmark of quality in alternative educational programmes, is individuality. This accounts for the wide diversity of initiatives, the unique nature of which, it is critical to preserve, in meeting the needs of so many different students. Shulman says whilst there is an obligation to raise standards in the interests of improvement and reform, it is important to avoid the creation of rigid orthodoxies. However, it is important to improve the validity of an evaluation by being aware that in discussing “programmes” the literature is not focusing on one entity, but many different options in reviewing the outcomes of programmes.

In keeping with Shulman (1987) Smith (1974) earlier described that there was no single model which could accurately describe all public alternative schools or programmes,

however according to Smith the majority fell into the following categories and are the most commonly discussed in the literature:

- Continuation schools: where conventional education has been interrupted, including drop-out centres, re-entry programmes, pregnancy maternity centres, and evening and adult high schools.

Co-operative alternative schools exist where one or more optional alternative schools are co-operatively funded and operated by several nearby schools.

- Free schools: students and teachers collaboratively plan and implement without the constraints of school administration.
- Learning centres: where there is a concentration of resources centrally, for all students in the community, venues including maybe vocational and technical high schools, and career centres.
- Multicultural schools serve such a body with ethnic awareness emphasised.
- Open schools operate around particular individualised activities.
- Schools within a school, or alternative units.
- “Schools without walls”, provide learning experiences throughout the community and offer increased interaction between it and the school.

This multiplicity of provision serves to illustrate that there is no single best solution. Instead it would appear that the focus needs to be on finding ways to map and co-ordinate diverse approaches, to provide a network of expertise and options which will benefit all.

Friedrich (1997) reports as a global evaluation, the remedial *type* of programme appears to have had a major effect on success. She also contends that programmes with specific curriculum focus are found to be more effective at improving student attendance and reducing drop out rates. This suggests that students need to experience parameters and clear goals. However Friedrich points out that where there were students with a history of disciplinary problems, educational programmes were generally ineffective in terms of student achievement and they also had a negative influence on student behaviour and attendance. NCVET (1999) outlines in a review of early school leavers that students were perceived as having low self-esteem, literacy and numeracy problems, learning difficulties as well as a lack of general social skills. Also noted as contributory were dysfunctional families and associated problems, poor and non-existent role models, together with a poor work ethic and distrust of a system they saw as having failed them.

As a means of meeting the needs of early school leavers Young (1990) describes a general approach by alternative programme providers, which has reflected a shift from simple to more comprehensive provision. Programmes are more focused, more

instructional, and usually have a particular curricular emphasis. Improved delivery extends to both method and school climate, as well as shared purpose and goal sharing. There is a student-focused philosophy that places emphasis on the whole student, a non-competitive environment, self-improvement rather than grades and recognition and greater autonomy where principals, teachers and students have greater freedom from central administration than in a traditional school. In addition Young stresses that the school or group is smaller and there are more personalised relationships between teacher and student. This description serves to put into perspective that educational provision goes well beyond just studying subjects.

Most programmes agree that changing the educational climate is a first step to re-connecting with learning for intractable students (Glasser, 1992). As classes are much smaller than traditional settings, there is a possibility for flexibility to address individual student needs in the structure of the day (Shaw, 1998). Students also have the advantage of one to one contact with staff and peers in a more informal setting. This is more conducive to personalised relationships, and accountability in an intimate setting. In a New Zealand study Briggs and Hawkins (1999) affirms this by saying the most important aspects of effective alternative programmes are small groups or one to one interaction, with a firm but kind facilitator.

Bradley's (1992) study of student retention in a Queensland state high school found that the group of interventions likely to have the greatest enhancing effect stressed such themes as: flexibility which supported work experiences, and longer days which gave opportunities for periods off. NCVET (1999) also noted that the flexible provisions for students to work independently and catch up on work at non contact times had the effect of reinforcing the desirable goals of self-motivation and self-responsibility, and also helped promote the academic purposes of schooling.

In summary, with regard to a hierarchy of criteria, the following features have been substantiated in the document. It would appear that firstly strategies to maintain student attendance and behaviour management are foundational to the provision of alternative education programmes, followed by smaller groupings of students operating in non traditional settings which particularly reflect the local culture, then setting of behavioural boundaries and clear goals. This allows for numerous other characteristics, as outlined above that can be used to build a successful environment that will promote opportunities for academic learning which should always be conducted in real situations. Such characteristics are context specific and should not be standardised. There will be the need for emphasis on some areas of operation in one programme being operated which will not be so significant in a programme operating elsewhere. In effect for success in this area once the foundational characteristics are in place individual programmes need be able to develop strategies that reflect their needs and local culture.

2.1.8 Key points on alternative education programmes

In order to clarify issues, keypoints are used to summarise the discussion of each aspect of quality provision in alternative education programmes.

- Quality characteristics of alternative programmes will have many similar features to mainstream programmes in relationship to theories and pedagogy of education and learning.
- Alternative programmes are difficult to evaluate because of their necessarily individual nature.
- It is important to preserve this uniqueness to respond to diverse needs.
- The key to alternative education success is the support of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Re-direction is the first step to re-connect the student with learning, this includes a changed learning environment, which is less complex, with fewer students, and warm but firm facilitators.

Part 2: What does an alternative education programme look like?

2.2.2 Introduction

In reviewing the literature it has become apparent that there are a range of characteristics that underpin the success of alternative education programmes. This section identifies and describes these characteristics.

2.2.3 Consistent attendance is a pre-requisite for success in alternative education programmes.

Introduction

Students attending alternative education programmes, have not had their needs met in a mainstream environment. According to Glasser (1992) their education has been stalled, no matter what their potential ability to achieve. There are barriers to learning, and previous to any hoped for success, these must be addressed, and students re-connected with learning.

As previously stated alternative education programmes do not conform to one model (Friedrich, 1997). Nevertheless they have very similar aims, and basic components. Firstly for success in such a programme Glasser (1992) argues the main requirement is that for a student to engage with learning they must establish a pattern of consistent attendance. This is because effective learning is cumulative. It requires that a learner is able to participate in a scaffolding process which leads them to the next stage of achievement, so they gain gradual mastery (Vygotsky, 1978). Alternative education programmes need to combat this fragmented attendance in order to allow the scaffolding process to work. Therefore it behoves the organisers of alternative education programmes to seek ways that encourage students to attend on a regular basis.

How to achieve good attendance

Gottfredson (1997) in discussing the factors that promote good attendance within alternative education programmes outlines the following strategies:

- the promotion of a warm nurturing and safe atmosphere
- staff intuition in responding to student needs
- a support network for other staff and students
- warm reciprocal relationships between staff and student
- small classes
- educational activities to take place in authentic settings, such as, shopping malls; real work situations
- staff responsiveness to student's changing needs
- endorsement by staff of the peer group as a important feature of socialisation in adolescence
- peer induction and peer support

Gottfredson's views on the promotion of peer support is reinforced by the work of Hetherington and Parke (1990) who endorse the importance of peer group interaction in adolescence, as well as promoting peer learning opportunities. Within this context Ryba, Selby and Kruger (1998) stress the need to support staff effort.

If consistent attendance is to be achieved within alternative education programmes Friedrich (1997) argues that coercive and compulsive behaviours on the part of the teacher will not succeed. Instead students must acquire an internalised desire to present themselves at the programme. Attendance according to Goodchild & Williams (1994) is the main criterion for quality programmes to function towards acquisition of basic skills for students.

2.2.4 Behaviour management and conflict resolution

Introduction

Glasser (1992) in his examination of what promotes quality education for students with histories of truancy, identified poor attendance as one of the major barriers to student learning. He found that many students were in alternative provision, because, in the large mainstream classroom their needs were unrecognised, and they responded by displaying consistent and frequent anti social behaviours. These were beyond what it is expected of the mainstream teacher to deal with. Some of the students in alternative programmes had already been involved with drug related, or law enforcement charges. This conduct was not only disruptive for the student involved but also for the smooth operation of the learning community, in terms of peers and educator stress levels. Behaviour management and conflict resolution according to Glasser (1992) need to be resolved as they are both associated with creating an optimum environment in which students feel comfortable and are motivated to learn.

How to achieve acceptable levels of social behaviour in the alternative education classroom

Glasser (1992) in promoting acceptable levels of social behaviour in alternative education programmes outlines the following strategies:

- Small classes leading to individual attention.
- Close relationships with adult educators as role models.
- Recognition that previous structures have not worked for these students.
- Non-authoritarian and non-coercive structures where the power is shared between the student and teacher
- Staff forestall negative behaviours from happening.
- Staff need to listen to students practice power sharing.
- Staff to project concrete goals.
- Staff being sensitive to student self-management.
- Negotiation of rules.

- Teachers need to let retaliation go.
- Students need a greater network of support.

2.2.5 What the curriculum looks like in alternative education programmes

Introduction

The curriculum comprises everything that goes on in a classroom, which consists of the pedagogy of how children learn, combined with what they learn about (Wilson, Schulman & Richert, 1987). An alternative education programme curriculum will have many of the same subject elements, but will be delivered differently than that in the mainstream. That the curriculum in an alternative education programme will embrace a full and holistic approach as also prescribed for students in the mainstream is a general consensus in the literature (Reilly et al., 1982; Quinn, Rutherford, & Osher, 1999). According to Reilly et al there needs to be both academic subjects as well as leisure and vocational activities, social inclusion, goals, choices, rights, staff training and professional development. The delivery of the curriculum according to Quinn et al should be positive, with direct student-centred instructional strategies, again aligned with functional assessment and curriculum. This view sees quality alternative education as still driven by standards specified in the general curriculum, with students progressing towards mastery of these objectives, but outside the conventional setting.

Literacy and numeracy as basic to life skills, require prominence within successful alternative education programme curriculums

Literacy and numeracy are seen as the most important baseline to any alternative education programme during the compulsory school years (Reilly et al., 1982). NCVER (1999) cautions there is a need to understand first, that the alienation from school has provided the barrier to learning, and this must be dealt with initially. The research reported by NCVER stresses that literacy and numeracy are basic to students' capacity to study anything else.

Whilst traditionally the primary schools were seen to provide these life skills, increasing efforts are required to provide support at ever increasing levels of age. Wilson et al (1987) say in that order to accommodate the range of learning styles and abilities in their classes, *all* teachers should have a very deep content knowledge, which means that they know the content so well that they are able to manipulate it, as this is the only way that it can connect with all the different schema held by their individual pupils. Further they emphasise that few teachers really know their subject matter as well as this. A superficial knowledge of the material does not allow teachers to present it in as many diverse ways as are required by the different of students. Wilson et al. link this with an in-depth pedagogical knowledge, whereby not only knowing the subject matter is enough, being aware of how to present learning experiences is complementary. They believe that this teacher excellence is particularly crucial for students in alternative programmes, who require more facilitator input to connect with learning than regular students.

Whilst there has been less academic success reported in alternative education programmes, there is agreement that life skills, literacy and numeracy should still be an important base in any alternative programme (Reilly et al., 1982). However these authors purport that there is less confidence in integrating these subjects into the programme which can lead to student failure and further alienation. This has implications for the calibre of the teacher of the programme. Quinn et al (1999) have raised the issue that students and teachers alike can feel inhibited around these areas of learning, and for this reason teachers are inclined to place less emphasis on these areas in favour of less controversial subjects such as, leisure activities and vocational pursuits. Such practice echoes the Dewey (1944) philosophy that education should place emphasis on the children and their interests, rather than on subject matter, education being a process of living rather than a preparation for living. Whilst these recreational subjects are important in their own right, Quinn et al argue that a quality curriculum will effect the correct balance arguing that opportunities within so called leisure activities will be made to promote literacy and numeracy, even though students may not equate this authentic material with former, more formal mainstream experiences. There must be a determined effort in an alternative programme to consider new approaches, and use these subjects in practical ways, in order to make them meaningful to students, who have failed them in their original mainstream guise.

How quality programmes can improve academic outcomes: there are some determinants of success

Whilst the literature is not optimistic regarding student prowess in literacy and numeracy, (Friedrich, 1997; Oakland, 1992; Reilly et al., 1982) there are some cases of reported success. Kinder (2000) found positive effects, in academic study, as well as behavioural and emotional gains, reduced offending, and improved communication. Kinder says the class was a heterogeneous group despite the fact students had the same status. Some success was attributed to a functional curriculum that met needs individually, as well as effective and efficient instruction aligned with functional assessment measures.

Additionally, NCVET (1999) indicates more success has been noted as there has been a “flow on” effect from changes in the mainstream. Whereas many failing students in regular classrooms had little or no support, more emphasis has been made remedially, in these schools anyway, and preventative programmes have been put in place in the classes to prevent failure in these areas, rather than when students drop out. This has shown benefits, and more students in the alternative programme schools surveyed had basic skills than was previously noted, as a result of having themselves been given this additional support prior to dropping out. This indicates alternative educators, should not just assume their students will have poor academic outcomes.

Quinn et al., (1999) in outlining determinants of success in alternative education programmes outlines the following characteristics

- Well-trained educators are the lynch pin in terms of student facilitation.
- Excellence in pedagogy.

- Sensitivity to students learning and transition needs.
- Small classes.
- 5.Exposure to the full curriculum.

Changed attitudes on the part of students over time

However there is some support for the notion that some students who have undertaken alternative education programmes may achieve success in later vocational training (NCVER, 1999). It is difficult after all for students having lost ground to make it up in the short-term (Friedrich, 1997). It is suggested that these students frequently have less mature cognitive skills to rationalise the need for behaviour change and effective learning support systems are required to ameliorate this problem (Parkinson, 1998).

Alternative education programmes need to be planned by providers with theoretical knowledge which includes an understanding of learning theories

The importance of having the curriculum planned and delivered by trained providers who have an understanding of how students learn has been focussed upon by Edwards, 1988b; Wilson et al, 1987. It is argued that a successful alternative education programme will acknowledge the importance of learning theory in planning curricula, as although individuals have different styles, they all learn along a prescribed path. Therefore, it should be taken into account by providers, that students in alternative provision are not different, but are the same as other learners.

The alternative education programme is a learning community, and as such presents an ideal unit for peer and teacher support in learning (Ryba, et al, 1998). As a result social theories of learning such as that of Vygotsky (1978) are most relevant. Vygotsky said that to a large extent, thought emerges as a social process and is then internalised by the individual only after it has been expressed socially. This means that a substantial proportion of thinking ability originates externally, which means the interaction and exchange of ideas in discussion with others is essential to growth and development. The implications in the context of alternative education are that for quality learning to take place the social situation needs to be supportive. Optimum teacher and student relationships will enhance the “scaffolding” of cognitive processes, as will the supportive trialing, reinforcing and discussion of peer relationships. With particular reference to alternative education models Briggs and Hawkins (1999) support the practice of inter-actional learning opportunities, with peers and teachers. Such a practice is not only pedagogically sound, but is more favourable than a “top-down” effect which emphasises the teacher status. Such practice is achievable in a smaller ratio of student to teacher.

Curriculum subjects are prescribed on an individual basis, allowing student choice

In decision making as to what subjects should be taught, successful alternative programmes reflect decisions on an individual basis as to which subjects should make up the curriculum components of alternative education programmes. This appears according to the literature to be almost universally agreed (Reilly et al., 1982). There is also

consensus, that due to very critical individual needs of students there should always be this flexibility within quality programmes. However, it does mean there is a very wide range of opinion amongst educators as to how much emphasis should be placed on academic study, and how much on sports and leisure, and self-efficacy activities. There are again implications here that staff in programmes require expertise which comes through training, rather than just experience in the field, to make really informed decisions (Reilly et al., 1982).

Where there is agreement on curricula it is acknowledged that most important are issues of choice. Advocates of these programmes say all participants are more loyal when they agree to be there and have a vested interest in programme success. Sylvestri (1982) says students being involved in choice and decision making with regard to the classroom are necessary for success, and adds, small size of class, a whole student approach, a supportive environment, and a sense of community will enhance any curriculum whatever the subjects.

Quality alternative education programmes need to be delivered differently from programmes in the mainstream

A major difference between quality alternative and mainstream provision in education is delivery. In alternative settings a more flexible approach is possible due to much smaller classes and increased educator support. An improved way of presenting activities is structuring the curriculum such that modules are short, both to sustain interest for students, and make the teaching programme less stressful for educators (DES, 1989). Further recommended by DES is the interspersing of a variety of leisure type activities on a frequent basis for the same purpose. It was reported that smaller class groups, in more intimate settings than is the norm in regular schools have tended to personalise and support learning and self-efficacy for students in the alternative programmes. These may be both indoor or outdoor venues, and frequently success is associated with authentic environments, within the community.

Glasser (1992) says motivation to learn is a major issue for students in programmes and intrinsic motivation alone will provide the impetus to learn. Students in alternative settings are demotivated, and reluctant. Whilst educators working with them can and should provide incentives, they need more than anything to help students develop a need to learn, which will eventually carry over as self-motivation, and be later supported by confidence through success. This says Glasser begins by giving explanations and discussing collaboratively this need to become conversant with particular bodies of information subjects for the future. This is easier to do in an alternative setting, where there is more focus on an individual in a smaller group of students, and there is also time to do it. Writing calculating and problem solving will always be the main thrust as life skills. However, a varied curriculum including history, social studies, health science and languages taught according to the needs of the individual, will cast the net wider, in terms of capturing the interest and imagination of students. Glasser says, as well as this there is more opportunity to explore an authentic curriculum in alternative programmes, due to the fact that studies are less orientated towards fitting into schedules and teaching to

exams. Alternative programmes are supported by community networks, and present ideal opportunities for “on site” learning. This learning in context is more meaningful, therefore students are more motivated, and salient features of the learning experience are more readily retained.

Quinn et al (1999) argue that because many students in alternative education come from disadvantaged backgrounds, they frequently require intensive personal support. In keeping with this suggestion daily living, social skills as well as vocational skills are pinpointed as additional extra curricula activities. It is considered that these subject areas support wellbeing where students learn coping strategies, stress reduction and relaxation techniques, as well as the importance of physical exercise, and proper nutrition.

With regard to vocational support whilst many alternative programmes do not have comprehensive vocational facilities on site and as one of the main aims of education in general is the effective transition to, and ultimate goal of meaningful work in the community, NCVET (1999) advise that access to part-time or vocational training in the community should be networked. The advantages of mainstream vocational networks need to be extended to alternative provision, for equitable practice. On the same theme Quinn et al (1999) suggest that networking in the community beyond vocational opportunities extends the curriculum in terms of community resources and is advantageous to students in terms of resources that are available.

2.2.6 Assessment and evaluation are important factors in monitoring student progress and teachers effectiveness

Introduction

According to Broadfoot (1992) who has supported the use of formative assessment within the learning process, no matter whatever educational programme students are engaged in diagnosis and feedback guides pupils in future goal setting. She stressed that planning programmes without assessment of achievement and progress is uninformed. Therefore as goal setting is the focus of planning ahead for individual students in alternative education programmes, diagnostic assessment needs to be an integral part of this. This has implications for educators to be informed of the latest understanding of assessment processes. With specific reference to alternative programmes Quinn et al., (1999) advised that students’ progress should be reviewed and goals revised, and this should be based on functional assessment, which ensures that evaluations are meaningful in being related in relevant terms to real situations, and should lead to a positive behavioural plan. Therefore educators in quality alternative programmes need to have an understanding of formative learning in order to use diagnostic assessment to inform forward planning of student programmes. Without this students will be disadvantaged.

Alternative educators need to be informed with regard to ongoing changes in assessment that will eventually affect their students

Whilst alternative education students are involved in a different delivery of programmes, adjustments with regard to changes within the New Zealand education system, notably in assessment will impact on them eventually with regard to competition on the job market. Mallard (2001) is ushering in reform by contending that outdated measures of assessment quoted notably in the 1999 School Certificate English exam illustrate that School Certificate English and indeed, “The entire secondary school qualifications system has passed its used-by date” (p. A11). He says that the traditional examination system labelled everyone either a success or a failure, not giving a clear picture of attributes for future education or employment. He says the new system will not only challenge the gifted but will provide a meaningful assessment for those who previously left school with nothing to show for their achievements. An emphasis is placed on strong verbal and interpersonal communication and problem solving skills. The strength of the new system will be the mix of exams and internal assessment that Mallard says is in the best interests of teaching and learning. It would therefore be important for alternative providers to be in close communication with developments in curriculum and assessment, such that their practices are in keeping with current government policy and philosophy. The opportunity for this is maximised by a consortium model of alternative education within New Zealand where mainstream schools have the responsibility for managing groups of providers within the community to deliver alternative education programmes.

2.2.7 Transitions are an important provision with regard to alternative education programmes.

Introduction

Ideally for students in alternative programmes the transition procedure between schools should be informed in the same way as it is for mainstream students. In expanding upon this premise Quinn et al., (1999) regrets the fragmentation of learning records for students in alternative education settings, as such develops a barrier for goal setting. Conversely Quinn et al., argue these records can perpetuate the student’s earlier ‘label’ of failure.

Successful alternative programmes will provide adequate transitions that support students at both entry and exit to the programme

Quinn et al., (1999) cover the following points in outlining effective transition:

- that progress is contingent upon effective transition between schools with an immediate response from the receiving school.
- Multi-disciplinary support.
- Transition and exit plan that sets goals based upon informed decision.
- Collaboration between mainstream and alternative settings.
- Co-ordinated linkages between school, family and social service agencies.
- Post programme support needs to be ongoing until the student is well established in further training or the workforce.

Further to Quinn et al (1999) NCVER (1999) indicated that there needs to be good connections between alternative educational programmes and vocational training options in order to facilitate access for these students into competitive courses.

2.2.8 Progress in learning is determined by self motivation

Introduction

Glasser (1992) says students become disengaged, because they see no meaning or relevance in their studies particularly where teachers are entirely exam focussed. A test curriculum is unauthentic, outside a context for learning and further Glasser argues that these students frequently have cognitive problems that raise difficulties for them with goals that focus upon the abstract.

Self-motivation is determined by the need of the individual for the desired

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) says the main impediments to learning are not cognitive. It needs to be recognised that students do not want to learn, rather than being unable to learn, and that better results would come from improved stimulation of students towards the enjoyment of learning, rather than in teachers trying to transmit learning.

According to Howe (1987) this intrinsic motivational core is credited with being crucial whenever anything of significance is achieved cognitively. At the same time negative motivational influences like fear of failure, helplessness, lack of confidence, and a sense that one's life is largely controlled by outside forces almost certainly have effects which restrict learning achievement.

Both the work of Howe (1987) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) are in keeping with Glasser's (1992) commentary that human behaviour is self-motivated by basic needs, such as, survival, love, power, fun and freedom. In this context of learning students have to need the results of learning to give them power in their lives. Glasser's work has added to the knowledge base on how to improve motivation of students in alternative education programmes. Such strategies include:

- Establishing a warm nurturing environment in the classroom.
- Recognising when students are about to lose sight of their goals.
- Step by step support for students in reaching long term goals
- Enlisting family support.
- Supporting students to overcome fear of failure and lack of confidence
- Actively supporting students' to develop self-esteem leading to self-motivation.

2.2.9 What are the characteristics of an educator in a quality alternative education programme?

Introduction

In any discussion about what an effective alternative education programme looks like those who deliver the programme have high profile. The preferred model in the literature emphasises the multidisciplinary nature of alternative education initiatives (Chamberlain & McKenzie, 1998; Millbank, 2000). Such an approach is described as a team of educators with other professionals being involved in a range of relationships with students to provide a holistic approach, which focuses on student health and welfare, as well as education

An effective alternative educator needs to be trained

In describing what constitutes an effective alternative educator Friedrich (1997) makes the point that there is a critical link between high quality experiences for pupils, and the level of education and qualification of staff. Wilson et al. (1987) say the often remedial nature of class activities make it essential that teachers actually require much more knowledge about the subject they teach than just a personal understanding of the subject matter. They require a specialised knowledge because the goals of instruction include not only content knowledge, but the transmission of knowledge and understanding to students. Teachers must have knowledge that translates into multiple approaches in order to be able to handle every individual student's needs in the learning situation.

Characteristics of effective alternative educators

Several authors have identified relevant characteristics associated with effective alternative educators (Anderson, 1986; Gerritsen, 1999; Shaw, 1998; Thomson, 1997) including:

- Teachers have at least a basic teaching diploma.
- They have supplementary specialised training in group management; social work training associated with petty crime, sexual abuse, conflict resolution and behaviour management.
- Good communication skills.
- Being a suitable role model.
- Counselling skills.
- Appropriate personal attributes.

Building and maintaining a close, ongoing relationship between a student and a primary educator is a necessary component of quality education provision

Relationships between educators and their students in alternative education programmes need to be optimal if there is to be any successful outcome (Edwards, 1988b). According to Edwards this illustrates a main difference which exists between these programmes and those in mainstream secondary schools. This is that secondary teachers, unlike primary generalists, teach specific subject areas, and are only associated with the students they teach on a very fragmented basis, such that they do not generally have close relationships with them. This is also true of secondary form teachers, who may provide a home base,

but do not actually spend any contact time at all with some individuals in their classes. Edwards says this is unsatisfactory for students who are failing and require the close relationship and support of individual teacher confidantes to help them through secondary school.

How close productive relationships between students and educators can be developed and fostered in alternative education programmes

The literature outlines how relationships can be nurtured between students and educators (Anderson, 1986; Anderson, Saltet, & Vervoorn, 1980; Batten & Girling-Smith, 1981; Briggs & Hawkins, 1999, Cody, Cornwell, Dakos, Harkin & White, 1987; Clark, Smith & Pomare, 1996; Edwards, 1988b; DES, 1989; Kanner, Coyne, Scheffer & Lazarus, 1981). Suggested strategies include:

- Having reduced class sizes.
- Having a small ratio of students to teachers.
- Helping students build a significant relationship with one person.
- Having teachers who practice consistency.
- Teachers displaying empathetic non-judgemental attitudes.
- Teachers power sharing with students.
- Non-authoritarian behaviour management of students.
- Encouraging student ownership of the learning process.
- Establishing rules, structures and systems of reward that are appropriate to adolescents.
- Operating a fine balance between flexibility and organisational structure.
- Providing a listening ear that supports students to reach their own resolutions.
- Engendering a positive teacher student relationship.

2.2.10 A community multidisciplinary support model complements teacher effectiveness in quality alternative education programmes

Introduction:

The school has traditionally carried the responsibilities for teaching children, and families for raising them. In more recent times according to Collins (2001); Glasser (1992); Lloyd-Smith and Davies (1995); Schmidt and Michener (1998) the boundaries of responsibility have become increasingly blurred. They believe that this has occurred because families have been assaulted by societal trends of increased mobility, fragmentation, and new patterns of employment that has added various dimensions to teachers' job descriptions. These now contain new repertoires of feeding and raising children as well as providing additional health, welfare and family support. Apart from factors of time, and questions of whose responsibility it is to provide these additional services, there are aspects of this support which teachers are not trained to fulfil. Glasser is supported by Anderson et al (1980) in agreeing that teachers working within alternative education settings will not be able to deliver quality programmes outside of a huge support infrastructure.

Alternative educators work in tandem with trained teachers to provide authentic community support

Within the alternative education movement according to Gerritsen (1999), educators fall into two categories. Firstly there are trained teachers seconded from the ranks of mainstream secondary schools and secondly educators with a youth, family and community support background. This latter group provides the basic support for the trained teachers in delivering the programme. Gerritsen makes the point that there is no specialised training qualification for teachers to work within alternative education settings although there is evidence of staff being able to undertake modules in behaviour management; group facilitation and counselling skills.

In terms of management and administration models for alternative education Glasser (1992) says management is responsible for providing leadership, vision and support where principals and senior staff look for creative approaches to management support and allocate resources. Overall leadership and management responsibility however within Glasser's paradigm remains within educational management structures.

Reported effectiveness of co-operative community services in education settings

McMillen (1998) says in terms of expected success in collaborative models of education, integrating and linking services to schools to improve outcomes for children is an ambitious social service reform effort. However there are success indicators. One of the arguments for multidisciplinary networks is the fact that it is naturally occurring in the networks of the family and community, rather than being an imposed intervention model. It may facilitate youth trust, a problem identified by Chen and Marks (1998) that youth have unmet needs because they shy away from regular services in the community because of misconceptions of delivery, unfamiliarity and particular issues associated with adolescent life-stage needs. Multi-disciplinary support should go some way to resolving this. McMillen said parents often experience the traditional social services system as punitive and inaccessible with services being delivered in ways that limit their effectiveness. In commenting on situations where full service delivery was used in schools (another educational model which integrates services) McMillen found that parents described a much more supportive and effective experience when receiving services in this collaborative way. The same was true for youths being integrated rather than set apart from their peers or preferred community. Where long term therapeutic relationships to address withdrawn behaviour was required, close collaboration of the therapist with teachers showed a gradual strengthening of the child's self image. This can only happen where there is a possibility for a long-term intervention in the natural community (Silin, 1998).

Support for staff is informational as well as practical in nature

Support for teachers goes beyond support staff and professional networks. Donmoyer and Kos, (1993), affirm the importance of research as a resource, which serves to inform, and

guards against a stringent general provision which is unalterable, and would inhibit optimum outcomes. Teachers are increasingly having to meet new challenges which demand a variety of teaching styles and methodologies, emanating from research on teaching and learning. Dunmoyer and Kos strongly advise that professional development for teachers needs to be a recognised part of the workload, rather than being additional.

2.2.11 Multidisciplinary practice requires a professional approach to operate successfully, which is the only accepted criterion for quality service provision

Introduction

Prior to any programme of provision, Schmidt and Mitchener (1998) say such collaborative schemes require co-operation between educators and clinical social workers, though their roles and functions are quite different. However professionals in both disciplines share the fundamental goal of helping children and adolescents achieve their full potential and assisting them in their search for personal meaning and purpose. In addition to this they share a common realisation that they are unable to do it alone. Both types of professionals understand the only answer lies in a multidisciplinary collaboration approach.

Apart from counselling there is a range of diverse expertise within health, welfare, and vocational parameters which is an integral part of the alternative education community. Whilst ideally this functions to the improved quality of delivery of student support, Robinson (1978) sounds caution. It needs to be recognised that collaborative practice models are not always successful. Sometimes it is difficult for different disciplines to work together. There are issues around who is really the body controlling the enterprise. They have diverse models of approach, and different solutions, and codes. Therefore alternative programmes need to ensure resolution at the outset, when participants need to set boundaries, and need to examine the effects of the institutional environment on themselves in order to develop an effective social work support system. Teachers and social workers must address themselves frankly to a variety of issues and influences and jointly engage in planning, reviewing and monitoring existing systems, to operate effectively as a pool of expertise.

Collaborative models of operation need to be supported by government policy

Glasser (1992) supports the view that teachers require considerable support structures for their endeavours, because of their major contribution, in a practical sense. Concern for many of society's institutions to meet the common need, has promoted a culture of co-operative developments across the system. However these have often operated at a base level without the support of official policy. Measures at field work level cannot succeed unless incorporated into the official policy of both education and social welfare agencies.

2.2.12 A successful alternative education programme will be responsive to and collaborative with families and whanau

Introduction:

There is now a history of support for families in the raising of their children. Intervention and enhancement programmes date from the 1960's when optimism set out to address social issues of human rights, equity, and mental retardation. Education was hailed as a major implement, particularly in the effort to improve the chances of lower socio-economic groups. One of the major results of these programmes such as Headstart in the United States was, that although the outcomes for children were sometimes inconclusive, children's development and educational achievement was highly related to parent involvement (Galinsky & Freidman, 1992). Programmes since this time have recognised the importance of parental participation in planning, policy, and implementation. There has been an evolution from the focus on the child, to the family. Children ceased to be singled out for intervention in isolation. Powell (1997) commented that whilst programmes are organised around children, to meet children's needs, parents cannot be ignored, particularly if the idea of partnerships is to be viable. Galinsky (1987) said that a parent's needs are unique often a need related to, but not held in common with the child. Adult facilitation should be seen as distinctly different from that of children, holding implications for any adult programme involvement. These ideas have supported the movement for parent education.

Parent Education and Family support are factors of success in alternative education programmes

Connecting successfully with parents is not something that necessarily happens naturally or easily for teachers. This is apart from the fact that there are more problems in alternative education where parents have frequently had to respond to teachers in negative circumstances (Konzal, 1999). Whilst parent education and support has long been acknowledged as an aspect of educational practice in schools, it is really only within independent parent education interventions from outside the schools, that there have been trained facilitators (Powell, 1997). This has very important implications for alternative programmes, which will require expertise in understanding and connecting with parents and families. Konzal says in such a context it is necessary to think of new ways of connecting with parents that honour their knowledge and insights, and more authentically involve them in their children's learning and the learning community. Oakland (1992) believes that "schools" typical parent involvement and communications strategies barely scratch the surface and may work against, connecting educational enterprises and families in ways that promote high quality and socially just schooling." (p.354).

Shartrand, Kreider and Erikson-Warfield, (1994) reported that teacher training does not include parent education components. This is reflective of Hughes' (1987) work that found teachers did not believe they had received any training with regard, to parent facilitation despite being certificated from four different training providers. This suggests that teachers working within alternative education would have the same

experience. Minuchin (1985) pointed out that whilst teachers may have great sincerity, this is not a substitute for theoretically supported knowledge with regard to parent facilitation. There should be an understanding as to the type of support required, and methods of effective delivery, beyond just recognition that families should receive this help. Konzal (2000) argues that too often educators who value a constructivist approach to teaching children revert to traditional ways with parents. At the same time there is a need to integrate culturally appropriate practice.

2.2.13 Students in alternative education programmes

Introduction:

Students in alternative education programmes have been alienated from mainstream schooling for a raft of reasons which has resulted in fragmentation and disruption in the gaining of lifeskills, and social emotional trauma through displacement (Goodchild & Williams, 1994). In a systemic theoretical approach the integrated quality of family and community is acknowledged, an optimum programme of education will require the co-operation of the student as well as the family and educators to function successfully.

The students involved in alternative education are at what Hetherington and Parke, (1990) define as the life-stage of adolescence, a time of inordinate life change for the pupil. In planning effective alternative education programmes it is therefore necessary to focus on their particular needs with regard to social, emotional and physical stages of development.

Students who are adolescents and as well are alienated from the mainstream have additional problems

In alternative education teachers need to be prepared to deal with situations where students have been subjected to abusive practices, and to support rehabilitative processes (Lowe, 1988). Bronfenbrenner (1986) indicates that if adolescents do not have healthy challenges they will find avenues of expression through drugs, promiscuity, and social withdrawal. He says evidence of the failure to challenge adolescents in healthy ways can be seen on the sidewalks and malls of most American communities, urban and rural (Weir, 1996). In describing characteristics of adolescents in alternative programmes, Lowe (1988) says when a young person moves along a fatalistic path which ensures (s)he fails to achieve success (s)he receives strong messages from significant people in her/his environment that indicate (s)he is a failure. This results in sadness and despondency. There is resultant disruptive behaviour. As well, expressions of anger and injustice elsewhere, can be a depressed student's device for attracting the kind of censure that he or she feels they deserve. Compounding these issues there is often a background of sexual abuse, bereavement, family illness, fear of the environment, poverty, physical abuse, and premature adult responsibility (Lowe).

Alternative education programmes need to consider the importance of the peer group at the adolescent lifestage

In view of the above alienation social contacts of peers are of particular importance at the adolescent stage of human growth and development. However if the expected socialisation process does not occur later remedial measures will need to be implemented. Therefore attention to the peer group in planning developmentally appropriate, modelling and social opportunities is a vital consideration for alternative programmes. Brody, Xiaojia, Conger, Gibbons, McBride Murry, Gerrard and Simmons (2001) respond that peer affiliations serve as proximal links to problem behaviour and disengagement from conventional activities like school attendance and academic achievement. These association tendencies develop over time, and have their beginnings in middle childhood.

There is an expected social development process

Brody et al. (2001) acknowledge the importance of adults in facilitating children's socialisation, and hypothesise that there are specific behaviours that adults enact in their neighbourhoods which reinforce the interconnectedness of community systems that are protective of positive child development, and support children growing up in the neighbourhood in their social development. This tends to peer socialisation and models an enhanced form of affiliation. Brody et al. call this the "collective socialisation process" (p.1232). Included in these processes is for example the willingness of a parent to monitor and supervise child behaviour even if the child is not their own. This is reciprocated by their friends and neighbours. However, Brody et al. say the reverse is true where there is an isolation and non-compatibility for some families excluded from community networks. The latter seems to be associated with adults, and thus families who are not well connected in their neighbourhood. In communities where collective socialisation processes work well, there are more opportunities made for children to spend time with peers in supervised contexts. Where this does not occur, children spend un-monitored time "hanging out" which encourages deviant behaviour. Brody et al. say the results of their study serve to affirm others that there is an increased efficacy of collective socialisation processes in communities outside large inner cities. It seems that apart from pedagogical consideration regarding interaction within the context of the alternative classroom, there is a need for staff to include families in programmes, with a view to helping them connect with the community, and by modelling a viable network within the consortium model.

How effective alternative programmes can give students maximum support to re-connect them with learning

For such disadvantaged students expert support is required to validate the previous years of school life to cope with new transitions. Lowe (1988) citing a common factor, advocates for opportunities for the enhancement of self-esteem to be built into educational programmes. Reid (1989) says the term troubled is generic, not only will each individual be one, but problems will all be different so no provision will meet all

needs. Many students have academic difficulties, familial, behavioural, psychological, and medical conditions that require the expertise of a multi-disciplinary approach.

2.2.14 Keypoints on what alternative education looks like

In order to clarify issues, keypoints are used to summarise the discussion of each aspect of quality provision in alternative education programmes.

Key points to achieving regular attendance

- Regular attendance is a pre-requisite for achievement in basic literacy and numeracy.
- Regular attendance is a difficult characteristic to achieve, but it must not be allowed to cloud goals for basic skill achievement, by becoming an aim in itself.
- Alternative educators should actively promote a warm nurturing environment, which will invite students and compel them to stay.
- Alternative educators need to recognise development and progress in established students.
- Alternative educators should use this factor to support established student development, as well as to change attitudes, by peer support of new students.
- Strategies should be negotiated rather than coercive, so that attendance is encouraged but not made compulsory, such that students internalise self motivation to attend.

Key points on behaviour management and conflict resolution

- Anti social student behaviours are barriers to learning and therefore must be resolved.
- Expectations, rules and boundaries with regard to discipline must be prescribed from the outset.
- Small groups of students give security, self-esteem, early identification of needs, and early intervention, all tending to good behaviour determinants.
- Educators need specialised training in behaviour management and conflict resolution, to effect a change in student attitudes, to be good role models and promote level status relationships with power sharing, and non authoritarian regimes with students.
- Behaviour change requires time. This needs to be recognised, but educators must not stall progress by dwelling at one stage. Students have made a new start and need to move on.
- Multi-disciplinary networks support behaviour change because they address needs, and thus improve the environment of the student, which allows learning to proceed.

Keypoints on curriculum

- Literacy and numeracy need to be the basis of any alternative education programme curriculum.
- Additional subjects will provide balance, interest, and motivation, as well as ideal opportunities to integrate meaningful literacy and numeracy exercises.
- A holistic view of students will further include personal support in terms of social, wellbeing, and vocational curricula.
- The alternative education curriculum needs to be taught in an authentic way, so students are involved in “concrete” situations, and their learning practice is using new life skills in a meaningful way in the community in real life.
- Links with school networks and community resources will be required to deliver the multi-disciplinary expertise required to support such a learning programme.
- Students need to have their own individual learning goals and personal plan.
- Time needs to be given to developing new students’ attitudes, and motivation towards learning.
- The authentic education classroom needs to have specific attributes, which are: be authentic, needs to operate on a socially equal status principle, with small learning groups who have choices, and negotiate and take ownership of their learning.
- Educators need to have professional training.

Key points on assessment

- The process of Formative Assessment is an integral part of the New Zealand Curriculum, giving information about students’ progress as a process of learning, as well as teacher effectiveness. It is the basis of programme planning and needs to be part of alternative programming as well.
- Educators in all sectors of education are responsible for keeping up to date with new knowledge and current practice in assessment.

Key points on transition

- Transitions at entry and exit to programmes hold potential risk for students who are unsupported at these times in alternative programmes.
- An effective alternative education programme will have strategies in place to support students at these times.
- Co-operation between mainstream and alternative education educators is recommended to maximise support for students at entry to alternative programmes.
- Access to exit programmes or the workforce needs to accommodate young leavers from alternative programmes, so they are not disadvantaged.

Keypoints on characteristics of effective educators

- Teachers are the most important resource in alternative education programmes.
- Teachers require training.

- General teacher training is inadequate for alternative education educators who assume a qualitatively different role to mainstream teachers.
- Additional areas of expertise required by educators are: remedial education, multiple learning style approaches, behaviour management, group management, conflict resolution, social work and counselling skills.
- Teachers are crucial role models for students.
- Teachers need to manage classrooms which have definite boundaries, and are warm nurturing, intimate environments where student feel comfortable, confident and are able to power share.

Keypoints on support models

- Worldwide trends show increased pressures placed on teachers in terms of responsibility to their students, is translated into fewer options to students alienated from the system, and at the same time strongly suggests a multi-disciplinary approach to support them.
- Teachers require extra curricular training, and research based information.
- Teachers need a strong educational support, from management to alternative educators from community networks.
- Teachers need a strong network support from complementary professions, health, welfare, social work, judicial, and vocational servicers.
- Issues of collaboration need to be addressed at the outset with regard to different professional organisations working together.
- Government policy regarding organisation needs to be addressed to be supportive.

Keypoints on parent involvement

- An individual cannot be viewed in isolation, but as an individual member of an interactive family system which in turn is interconnected to community networks.
- A family unit, whatever its structure is unique and cannot be duplicated by a programme.
- Parent education and support are critical components of programmes for supporting students.
- Parent education and support will have change outcomes that help boost student self esteem, reinforce the programme, and benefit parenting skills that impact on the student.
- Collaborating with parents is not easy, educators need training in adult facilitation to be confident and effective.

Keypoints on students within alternative education programmes

- The students' adolescent life-stage needs to be acknowledged with its accompanying phenomenal physical emotional and social change.
- The adults role in facilitating and supporting normal socialisation processes which promote wellbeing and healthy development needs to be recognised.

- The prominence of the peer group for teens can be used as an “engager” and support strategy.
- Students need adults and peers to respect, acknowledge and appreciate them as people to build self esteem and confidence which will restore and maintain wellbeing as well as connect them with learning.
- A holistic view of the student is well supported by a multi-disciplinary approach.

Part 3: What are some “best practice” models for alternative education?

2.3.1 Introduction:

Throughout the literature there are examples of reportedly successful alternative education programmes operating, either individually or nationally. Whilst terms such as “uniqueness,” and “individual” are usually applied to these initiatives, these refer to the responsiveness programmes have in terms of reflecting the culture of their own community. One of the implications of the diversity of programmes is that different communities are addressing quite different issues. This uniqueness, however, does not prevent evaluation of the successful indicators of such programmes. Whilst providers work differently within diverse frameworks, they actually strive for similar goals. This chapter describes a selection of programme experiences that cover international boundaries (Houck, 1997). One of the implications of the diversity of programmes is that different communities are addressing quite different issues.

2.3.2 A Swedish study attempts to improve transition support

One of the problems facing programme providers is how to provide smooth transitions for students from programmes to the workforce or vocational training. If momentum is lost at this stage of their education much of the potential for success may be lost. NCVER (1999) says “there is no single best solution. A number (of programmes) are exploring new approaches to transition pathways” (p.6). A preventative, integrated, community and partnership approach in Sweden (Durand-Drouhin, McKenzie & Sweet, 1998) is working on this particular aspect of their programme. Here local authorities are obliged to take responsibility for their youth up until age 18. This applies to young people who although they have left school are still under 18 years. A personal plan is drawn up for each student of school age, with elements of counselling, education, and work, which is reviewed every ten weeks (Durand-Drouhin et al.). There is an emphasis on the need to constantly assess and review to ensure there is a successful process of socialisation, and that academic progress develops. There is an efficient system of tracking, to ensure that nobody is “falling through the cracks” (Durand-Drouhin et al. 1998, p.6). This requires an adequately funded support framework. Additionally the possibilities for future employment or regular education are constantly reviewed.

Norway and Ireland operate similar schemes. Community based approaches in Norway and Ireland see the local centre staffed by trained guidance professionals who advise local students and deliver training sessions in the area. There is an emphasis on the importance of training for teachers. Expectations are that teaching staff in alternative education programmes are frequently in a more challenging role than their mainstream counterparts. Therefore their training needs go beyond regular curricula and pedagogical qualifications. These extra curricula areas of expertise include counselling, social work, behaviour management, and employment networks (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (1996). The Nordic approach keeps numbers of

students in programmes low (Durand-Drouhin et al 1998). It can strain municipal resources but leads to rapid identification and action as keys to success. Action is inextricably linked in this approach to effective programmes, as preferable to providing a separate system. With regard to prevention of mainstream failure it is seen as part of the whole so prevention and sustaining are all part of the total picture. It is seen as the mutual responsibility of the community. There is therefore active engagement of the government, community, employers and trade unions in policy making, programme design, and certification where appropriate. Heightened community awareness is an important determinant of success.

Community involvement is a crucial facet of delivery whether the model is a national or a local one. The immediate community or neighbourhood have a collective sense of responsibility for their youth. The Swedish model is in line with the work of Smith (1974), an earlier author in alternative education who emphasised the usefulness of voluntary clientele, commitment to being responsive to the needs of the community, more comprehensive goals and objectives, and greater flexibility, amid a smaller environment which typically results in fewer rules and bureaucratic restraints.

2.3.3 The Hanging Gardens: an English programme initiated by parents

An initiative reported in the British literature was The Hanging Gardens Project in England (Goodchild & Williams, 1994). This has been included in the review as it was a unique venture, in that it was initiated and operated by parents. Parents reinforced what was being done, as well as supported students in routines of attendance, as well as improved self-esteem (Edwards, 1988b). The Hanging Gardens Project operated initially with only parents as educators. Later a qualified teacher was employed. Whilst the initiative was not long lived, due to a lack of funding, leading to teacher burnout, the parent initiative was effective in its family and community involvement.

Goodchild and Williams (1994) reported on the successful features of the English project. Firstly the location of the programme was close to the centre of the town, such that there was great accessibility into the real world, including the local shops and cafe, so that activities could be linked to the meaningful context of the community, employing the “schools without walls” model described by Smith (1974). For instance, students regularly had a stall in the marketplace. Students were not “contained” in the classroom but operated as part of the community and used the networks accordingly. Camps away from the centre were also popular, and even included ex-pupils now returned to the mainstream. However, this did have ramifications for supervision. The school had a basic lack of structure as the formal classroom had been strictly routinized and this was seen as one of the reasons for failure in the mainstream with regard to the pupils using this programme. Interestingly, despite this, students had originally negotiated for structured programming. This may have been because this was their only experience of school programmes, and they could not recognise anything else as “learning” (Goodchild & Williams, 1994). Students reported liking the result. Improved freedom was also originally despised but later applauded by parents, as they saw students self-worth using this freedom effectively, instead of in maladaptive ways. Parents felt this had contributed

to the children's increased confidence. The programme did establish a pattern of attendance however casual, it was a safe environment, and students learned a sense of efficacy through their sense of management and control in forming a school with their parents. Goodchild and Williams attributed success to the parents being essentially like minded in their goals for the programme, and employing discussion so the students were of equal involvement and status, and had choice in their lives. It is notable that when the programme failed financially all the students were accommodated back into the mainstream school. Of the nineteen children served by the programme, five made a successful re-integration. Students "were able to cope" (p 73). It was not known whether it was because the children "were a year older, because time heals, or had something happen to them" (p.73) as participants in an alternative education programme which better equipped them for survival.

2.3.4 Models of alternative education programmes operating successfully in USA and Canada.

A Castleberry and Enger study (1998) has been chosen as of interest as it indicates some assessment of an alternative programme through the perspectives of students themselves. Most programmes are viewed through independent observers, and through the report of educators. Castleberry and Enger noted in Arkansas, school districts are required to provide an alternative learning environment (ALE) for students unable to achieve success in the regular school programme. The effectiveness of the ALE is measured in terms of the student outcomes of: improved academic achievement, reduced drop out and suspension rates and improved attendance at school.

The ALE programmes in Arkansas, are arranged where 62% of school districts have a stand alone programme, and 38% participate in co-operation with other school districts. The effectiveness of the programme from educator perspective is measured by student outcomes of improved academic performance, reduced dropout and suspension rates, as well as improved attendance.

At the end of the year students were rated good or fair in their attendance, behaviour, work ethic, academic success and attitude, but academic success was not rated nearly as highly as attendance, behaviour or attitude. (Enger, Castleberry, Smith, 1996). Numerous studies have reported the same academic achievement and attendance. The most cited reasons being smaller class size, which provides more individualised and personal attention (Bates, 1993; Conant, 1992).

Secondary school students were asked open ended questions along with items contrasting mainstream and alternative options. Interviews were conducted in 21 programmes. Students were 58% male, 42% female, with 67% white 27% black and 65% other ethnicity. Two thirds had attended more than a semester. Results indicated 95% of students viewed their lack of success in mainstream classes as commensurate with poor attitude. Other factors contributing to a lack of success were to do with the pace being too fast. They said they were never able to finish work and always felt pushed. The reported

teachers “didn’t have time to go back and explain things if you didn’t understand” (Castleberry & Enger, 1998, p.107).

Students also criticised teachers in their teaching methods, that they lectured and students could not learn that way. Also there were too many students in class and too many distractions. “I could sleep in class and never be noticed,” (Castleberry & Enger, 1998, p.107). Students further reported absenteeism through personal problems such as trouble with family and relationships in general.

In contrast to mainstream criticism ALE programmes were overwhelmingly preferred by students. Their preferences in order were because: the size of classes allowed improved relationships with staff, more expectations, a better atmosphere, more enjoyable courses, more intimate buildings, with a schedule fitted to their needs. They “knew their peers better”...got along better” with them (Castleberry & Enger, 1998, p.109), thus improving their peer relationships.

Students were asked how they would know they had been successful in the alternative school. The authors said this was the question students found most difficult. Most indicated they would know by a measure associated with school grades, some by improved behaviour and others that teachers would tell them, yet others a return to mainstream school. Some of the assessments made by students were: “The ALE has completely changed my life. If I had not come here. I’d be in jail like I was before”... “If I hadn’t come to the ALE for help on my English I’d be further behind in all my classes”...“I would still be repeating the same grade again. Starting all over again. Failing again” (Castleberry & Enger, p.108). It was notable that students when asked why fellow students had dropped out of the alternative programme if it was so successful, said this was because: they had bad attitudes, they were lazy, had personal problems, reached 18, had to work, became pregnant, or did not like the rules.

There was a positive view of the new start. Conclusions drawn were that perceptions of success were related to individual locus of control. Where individuals perceive they control events they are internally motivated to succeed (Berns, 1997). The reverse is also true. Castleberry & Enger (1998) found students in the study were responding to the programmes by taking responsibility for what was happening in their lives. There was no reported gender or ethnic difference in student impressions.

2.3.5 A review of services for students

Houck (1997) sets out to describe a continuum of services for students. This is a useful summary of programmes. Its value lies in diversity, which nevertheless indicates the expected commonalities of alternative provision, rather than an in-depth record of each situation.

One study documents alternative education programmes in Pennsylvania for disruptive and at risk students in order to determine the characteristics that make such programmes successful. The study was conducted by surveying 259 assistant principals in

Pennsylvania as well as a review of programmes submitted by both school districts and private agencies. Such programmes are not seen as a solution to all behavioural problems but a "smart start" to addressing the increasing number of at "risk" students within the schools. Educators warn against being "warehoused" (Houck, 1997), and offered a watered down curriculum which in fact only gives them a cursory programme and exacerbates their disenfranchisement from the mainstream system.

The Educational Law Centre in Philadelphia has proposed that alternative education programmes meet the same level of instruction which is mandatory in regular and special education programmes operating in Pennsylvania. To date this has not been considered by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. However accountability is being considered in terms of meeting certain standards because of state funding criteria. The main concern expressed, as elsewhere in the literature, is the need to dissuade conformity in programmes.

"States should encourage and support local control. No single programme will work for all students or districts. Districts need flexibility to design the programme that will best serve parents, families, the community, and their student population" (Houck 1997, p.12). Despite this proviso, Houck suggests that most models share common features. Successful programmes include such features as: appropriate culture, climate, organised structure, curriculum and instruction, and networks to other programmes and services. Commonalties of successful programmes as described by Houck are:

- clear mission,
- low teacher-student ratios
- mentoring atmosphere
- vocational or service learning component
- strong parental involvement
- collaboration with other agencies
- ongoing counseling
- interdisciplinary thematic units
- flexibility and individualism

The survey in this Pennsylvania programme reported the importance of counseling mentoring, and co-operation with other services. Houck (1997) cites that few comprehensive studies have been done, but a volume of anecdotal evidence points to success in these programmes. Students gain an opportunity to return to the regular classroom to continue their education as a feature of these programmes.

Houck (1997) cites a "well designed" project in Oklahoma that showed students improved on a variety of measures including:

- improved grades
- improved attendance,
- increased number of courses failed and
- fewer disciplinary referrals

Houck (1997) cited students' satisfaction in programmes where strategies incorporated were from special education teachers, reform-minded regular classroom teachers, individualised instruction, co-operative learning, competency based learning, team teaching, peer tutoring, mentoring, and hands on learning. Such programmes had the following effects:

- improved self esteem
- fewer discipline problems
- less disruption
- fewer violent incidents.

Oklahoma Technical Assistance Centre in 1995 suggested that students performed better when programmes were long rather than short-term. In this programme students were in alternative provision temporarily, but for at least 9-18 weeks. This period is long enough says Houck, (1997) for them to have a chance to refine social and disciplinary skills, get accustomed to managing their own frustrations and learning conflict resolution techniques.

Some of the desirable features of such programmes include collaborating with other agencies. However other components in Houck's (1997) review are seen to be even more important:

- parent involvement:
- mentoring
- staff training
- consistent enforcement of rules
- holding students responsible for their actions
- contracts with parents and students.
- instructional methods emphasising individualism are a daily success as a confidence booster.

Houck (1997) says there is less success for students to return to the mainstream. A main feature of the programmes is that this is a "last chance" and as such, an opportunity to turn circumstances around exists but this relies on the responsibility of the student. Houck cites a series of vignettes from a variety of sources and states which are outlined below:

Mays Landing New Jersey

This programme has a staff of three teachers and an assistant, social worker, secretary, and school principal. It's staff have ongoing in-service training in passive physical restraint techniques as well as in behaviour management. Within the programme school resources are used from the home school and the primary goal is to alter behaviour through:

- positive reinforcement
- direct instruction
- feedback
- modeling/coaching
- education
- a daily/monthly reward system
- 40 minutes daily of effective education
- conflict resolution
- service learning
- parental involvement.
- multidisciplinary resources are Family Life Education, Counselling Services, mental health/mental retardation services
- juvenile probation
- foster grandparents

Assessments are completed to decide on students' readiness to return to the classroom. This includes the extent to which overall behaviour improves, as well as self-esteem and positive attitudes. As this programme is directed towards students returning to the mainstream, it requires a transition programme to ensure support where students visit the school with a social work support person, one day, then one day alone. There is a weekly follow up for the first 2 months in home school, then further follow up if required.

Norristown Area School District

Houck (1997) reports the primary goal here is vocational due to students' poor academic record. Staff participate in in-service programmes regarding disruptive adolescents. The curriculum is focused on life skills. Features of the programme include:

- Basics of English, maths, science, health physical education, social studies and if required special education
- A vocational course is provided at Alternative School Centre for Technical Studies.
- Students have a reward system for achievement and positive attitudes as well as an attendance record
- Students receive ongoing counselling individual, group and career.
- Parental collaboration is sought as active partners by signing a contract to signify support of programme goals. Staff are in constant contact by phone, and do home visits and school conferences.

Bradford and Sullivan Counties Programme

Staff comprise a manager two teachers and a drug and alcohol counsellor. Teachers are trained in behaviour modification as well as having other professional development. There is a curriculum emphasis on maths, English, social studies, science, health and life skills. Students who test two grades below the norm also take reading. There is a major emphasis on individual student responsibility. Parents are involved at the interview initially to gain a full understanding of the programme, and are expected to sign student journal entries, in recognition of the importance of family endorsement of the programme. Return to the mainstream criteria are based on student behaviour and academic progress by academic staff (Houck, 1997).

2.3.6 Alternative programme commonalities with regard to success indicators

Tobin and Sprague (1999) writing about experiences with programmes in Oregon, list the common features found in alternative education programmes and describe a model programme. The authors reiterate few studies have been conducted and those that have are difficult to generalise beyond their specific settings. Nevertheless they include a summary of research based alternative education strategies which are given as evidence of quality programmes:

- Low ratio of students to teachers
- Highly structured classroom with behavioural management (includes positive reinforcement, highly predictable structure, and self-management.)
- Positive rather than punitive emphasis on behaviour management (a reward system, boundaries clearly defined, and positive reinforcement initially)
- Adult mentors at the school. These adults must take students as a special interest, use positive reinforcement, track behaviour, attendance, attitude and grades. They are only effective if trained to use behaviour management and positive reinforcement
- Social skills instruction (problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management, and empathy for others). Advocated is a model which analyses the student's family background, but then moves on to a functional assessment of the problem behaviour as it occurs in the school setting. The programme needs to identify what allows the behaviour to be maintained, as well as pro-social behaviours to replace maladaptive ones. Student involvement throughout is recommended
- High quality academic instruction (intimate setting with directed responses).

2.3.7 Effective results are outcomes only of effective programmes: A study of practice in Toronto.

Gagné (1996) gives a comprehensive detailed account of effective practice with particular insight into the reasons for successful results in a Toronto, Canadian programme. It is useful for its in-depth consideration of a particular programme at Contact School with some comparison regarding different approaches to student choice and “add ons”.

Gagné (1996) describes programmes as categorised by Types 1, 2, and 3. This typology stems from a seminal work by Raywid (1995). Gagné explains that there are three types of alternative schools. Individual schools with their diverse histories and purposes approximate these to varying degrees. Type 1 alternatives are ideological progeny of the 60s programmes that aimed at making school engaging, challenging and fulfilling for staff and students. At the same time organisation administration and programmes depart from the traditional mainstream approach. Type 2 programmes are temporary placements and accommodate students’ expulsion. Behaviour modification is a focus, but there is no attempt to modify the curriculum or pedagogy, and students work individually attempting to complete the same work as the mainstream school. Type 3 programmes are “more positive and compassionate” in orientation than Type 2 (Gagné, p.313). They have a remedial focus, and strive to rehabilitate and return students to the mainstream. In Type 2, “they often serve no purpose other than ridding conventional classrooms of disruptive students” (Gagné, p.314). Gagné (1996) reports an important difference is whether students have choice or are assigned to the programme. Type 1 programmes are by student choice. Type 2 have students assigned, and Type 3 have a combination of choice and assignment. Along with these differences, the types have different underlying assumptions about what needs to be changed. Type 1 assumes by changing the components of a school’s programme and environment, this will effect change in achievement and behaviour of students. Types 2 and 3 assume a deficit model that students are not successful due to their own inadequacies, and require “fixing”.

To succeed with at risk students “alternative schools need to be communities of support” (Gagné, p.314). Raywid (1995) found alternative schools identified the interpersonal relationships fostered by the school climate as their most distinctive characteristic, beyond instructional strategies. Successful programmes however did personalise classroom practices, pace and content. This creativity being a characteristic of effectiveness. Not only is the curriculum more challenging and compelling but it is responsive to student needs. It was noted that experiential learning and field-based practice was highly evident. High emphasis was also placed on emotional and social development of students. Successful programmes place great emphasis on the difficult task of helping students take charge of their own learning and personal lives.

Gagné (1996) cites a number of other characteristics associated with effective programmes, such as small class size, separateness physically from the school, distinctiveness of the programmes staff and students. Teachers' roles are different from the sense expressed by the term “teachers” in the mainstream school. They are more broadly defined as "advisors, friends, mentors, and advocates". (p.315). Street workers are educators whose role is to work with students at survival level, to ensure they have basic needs taken care of. These different roles allow the teacher to interact at multiple levels in the student's life.

Flexibility and informality allow order through developing norms of behaviour rather than imposing rules and regulations. Choice of programme reflects and ensures higher levels of motivation and commitment for students and greater sense of responsibility for teachers. Gagné (1996) cites Contact High School as an effective model of alternative education embodying the characteristics outlined below:

The Philosophy of Contact School:

- Values all participants, teachers and street workers, school is a forum of social change by redressing inequities for its students.
- Personal connections, acceptance, and caring.
- Students are supported to draw on their own resources to make choices and accept responsibility, and to reach out to others as citizens of their own society. Authentic relationships are central to operation.

Choices for students:

Learning and teaching is linked to personal freedom. Making and valuing choices are emphasised. The following notice is prominently displayed at Contact School:

We must never be blinded by the futile philosophy that we are just the hapless victims of our inheritance, our life experience and of our surroundings-that these are the sole forces that make our decisions for us. This is not the road to freedom. We have to believe that we can really choose (Contact School, p.316).

Teachers and street workers' roles:

Teachers, street workers and office staff make the autonomous daily decisions. Empowering and knowledgeable of structure, teachers have two distinct roles managing the organisation and teaching. Autonomy is the key to effectiveness. Gagné (1996) says the autonomy is more than just wresting the authority and power from those external to the school or from the bureaucracy: it is the means by which the teachers in Contact School can engage fully and effectively in the nurturing of education in the school (p.316).

Student commitment:

Attendance is not compulsory in alternative programmes at Contact School, but students have an attendance choice 50% for morning classes, English and maths and selected options. Sixty seven percent for non-participatory afternoon classes with 80% for afternoons where drama and physical education classes operate. Penalties apply if these parameters are not kept, and these are discussed at the ON/OFF meetings. Attendance is not left for student decision making but is actively policed, with home checks. These also reveal indicators as to whether the student has overslept, is sick or reluctant which uncovers pressing needs, which is information to denote the support focus. In addition, contracts are used with students to help change behaviour on a credit rating. Students who still have problems can attend tutorials which are held weekly to support them out of class.

Programme priorities:

There are three priorities driven by the active community, all equally important:

Survival needs of the student are carried out by "street workers", also special support workers, professionals, nurses, counsellors and teachers. This school's students tend to have poverty as a barrier, as it is an inner city school, some students have more needs than others. Material and psychosocial needs are met in a practical way. This includes nutrition for those who come to school hungry, help in applying for welfare and transportation, bursaries funding for winter clothing, single parent access to the school nurse, and social worker. There is a psycho-educational consultant, for those with physical psychological health problems, a woman's group for victims of abuse and help with finding appropriate housing and day care.

Academic programme: There is compensatory education, credit courses, and educational experiences to expand horizons. There is recognition that there are special needs as well as just negative experiences, learning disabilities and socially emotionally problems. These areas of need are particularly supported if students re-integrate into the mainstream. A special inner city budget is set up for certain activities such as field trips winter coats, and nutrition to boost survival needs and lift students to the next need area to re-connect them with learning. Small class size is a main feature.

At Contact there is an individualised personalised approach to academic teaching. Students are active in choices, courses are authentically in context, and teachers are up-to-date with current practice. The curriculum reflects that of the mainstream but includes "student needs" which can be developed according to student request, reflecting the population. Some cited needs identified are: native literature, creative writing, English writing, academic writing, personal life management, street law, society, challenge and change, psychology, native studies, American Black studies, Lesbian and Gay fiction and film. An oral English class is compulsory, including a speaker, field trips, nutrition, recycling programmes and a focus on listening and speaking skills.

Connection to the world is the third programme area emphasised, where students are supported to network beyond, to the school and community. This allows transition as alienated students re-join the mainstream world and community on a personal level.

Contact School in summary:

Gagné (1996) says the difference with Contact school is "its inclusiveness, and its belief in the equality of each of its members is borne out in the school's strong anti-discriminatory and non-violence policies" (p.321). At the same time it takes into account that students need to be connected with the world and a future beyond the classroom, alternative or mainstream.

2.3.8 Effective alternatives for disruptive students

Gregg (1996) a special education liaison officer in Charleston, West Virginia discusses the creation of effective alternatives for disruptive students. Rather than trying to improve school systems many authorities adopted the model of providing other options. Gregg's work is included as it debates the view that many programmes set out to "shape students to better fit the system" rather than "better meet their needs" (p.107), and it critiques the deficit model. Gregg (1996) includes a table of comparative structures across the three Types of programme models as developed by Raywid (1995).

Gregg (1996) citing the deficit model says this focus can have the effect of focusing on student deficiencies, obscuring problems related to the school system or delivery, when the structure of the programme needs attention. Some of the features of successful alternative programmes advocated by Gregg (1996) are: small size classes, and teacher training beyond mainstream courses. Gregg (1996) says inadequate teacher preparation is reflected in teachers never having had training in behaviour management or how to help students with different learning needs, as these students are very evident in alternative classes. Apart from training, it is necessary to provide teachers with teaching support to accommodate the extra issues for students with special needs. Gottfredson (1986) supports Gregg's (1996) advocacy against the deficit view by saying support must go beyond the classroom to school leadership, which must reflect support for high standards. It is easy to remove the student as the problem, yet the root cause may be lack of school management effectiveness, poor climate and lack of addressing cultural needs. These aspects of school life being recognised and changed, may improve student drop-out rates.

Alternative programmes need to focus on academic achievement rather than limiting expectations of student progress

Gregg (1998) says it is important not to underestimate the importance of extending students academically in alternative programmes. Their being there does not necessarily mean they cannot achieve, but that the system and pedagogy of the mainstream has not been a suitable environment for them personally to learn. The new alternative programme if it is effective, will have changed the parameters of mainstream learning thus reducing

barriers and opening new vistas to progress. Gregg says in fact a "lack of high academic standards, without clear and fairly administered entrance and exit criteria and the right to due process may violate students' educational and civil rights" (p.108).

Gregg cites the original 3 category types, and suggests the following criteria need to be considered where there is the intent to have effective outcomes for programmes:

- **Clear signals** as to purpose, which are reflected in assessment practices, and specific support for individual needs
- **A punitive purpose may deflect** providers to ineffective models for improving behavior and achievement. (Type 1 school criteria which are inclusive and provide choice are to be preferred). A punitive focus carries the risk of "creating a two-tiered system: good schools and good teachers for good kids, and bad schools, and bad teachers for bad kids" (p.109).
- **A systems focus and educational purpose** offer the best options for effective programmes across all populations of race ability and socio-economic status. Aleem & Moles (1993) say "schools may do more to reduce student violence by creating nurturing environments than by placing primary emphasis on trying to control student behaviour" (p.112).

2.3.9 Alternative programmes for younger aged children

Weir (1996) discusses the relative characteristics of alternative programmes as they apply to younger students who are 'dropping' out at a younger age than ever. This work has been included to show that younger students can have programmes adapted to their needs, and provides a further affirmation of effective programmes.

Weir (1996) cites the following successful alternative components as adaptable for younger students:

Organisational components include:

Small groups, environments which are unlike traditional schools, links made to community networks of support, flexible attendance, student decision making, staff in-service, designs for different types of dropout behaviour, and school organisation into multidisciplinary teams.

Instructional components include:

Attendance improvement projects, career development, a climate supportive of individual needs, co-operative learning and peer tutoring, computer assisted instruction, a wide range of instructional techniques, integrated curriculum, a wide range of curriculum materials other than texts and commercial educational materials, accelerated learning techniques to gain grade level skills to peer equivalent, active interdisciplinary projects linking school to life experiences.

Interpersonal components include:

Sensitive caring teachers, who *choose* to work with these students and are positive about them, climate supportive of development of students; self-esteem, opportunities for informal interactions with adults, development of a sense of community within the alternative school to foster student identification with school, co-operative learning for diverse populations, parent and community participation and counselling.

2.3.10 Rosemount : an Australian alternative day programme, operates on a three tier level

This study has been included as due to there being a paucity of New Zealand literature available international sources have been researched. In comparison with some of this material Australian information is useful, having geographic, colonial settlement similarities with conditions in New Zealand. Rosemount's three tiered approach is with the individual, the family and the peer group. The programme has a philosophy of respecting the worth of the individual, no matter their circumstances or actions. Interventions only occur as a result of stringent assessment and evaluation processes. The referral process includes the whole family in a personal interview. Specific dimensions of the programme are:

- students are admitted by choice
- there is a contract signed
- considerable family involvement
- setting of goals
- choice of programme focus
- gaining autonomy
- structures and clear benchmarks
- level social structures
- a supportive environment
- creative art tasks
- focused social opportunities
- "learning to laugh together"
- sports and physical activities
- leisure day outings
- camps
- work experience opportunities

Rosemount uses group work and individual time for presentation with two types of group:

1. Task centered those dealing with a particular topic e.g. nutrition
2. Maintenance centered those that deal with specific interpersonal concerns of the students

This is a conceptual distinction, and more an indication of the stated objectives of the group. Group maintenance tasks need to be addressed so that the group can progress more effectively, whilst the task centered group works through a topic, example “contraception advice”. Mode will change as will topic with the needs of the group. Flexibility is a key issue. Other topics explored are: job skills, legal issues, drug and alcohol use, nutrition, sexuality, and value exploration. Audio-visual presentations are a feature as well as guest speakers.

Issues relating to effective practice as illustrated at Rosemount are:

- Non intervention may be the route, if a family is being “over supported”
- Families are encouraged to make use of their own resources rather than becoming dependent on interventionists
- In a case of “over-intervention” Rosemount will liaise with other groups already involved with the family
- Consultation is used at outset with “difficult families”
- Milan Style Systemic Therapy is used with some families where many workers are involved, and behavioural problems are longstanding
- A Structural/Strategic approach is used where the intervention is short-term.
- A collaborative approach with other agencies so that different groups supporting the family are working in unison, rather than prescribing different strategies.
- Recognition of the preoccupation with peer group socialisation that is a feature of the adolescent classroom.

2.3.11 Keypoints on characteristics of the programmes described

In order to clarify issues, keypoints are used to summarise the discussion of each aspect of quality provision in alternative education programmes.

In summarising characteristics of the programmes:

- No single programme will have all elements deemed appropriate for alternative education.
- The focus must be on providing new pedagogy and new curricula, rather than on students' deficits.
- Multidisciplinary groups need to be collaborative.
- Teachers need to be trained to new roles and adequately supported at all levels.
- Inclusion and equality must be addressed.
- Specialist support needs to be available for special needs students.
- Attendance and commitment of students is paramount.
- Contracts may address the above and will involve families collaboratively.
- Students have survival needs first.
- High expectations of students in academic subjects should be maintained, a new start, a new way, a second chance.

Part 4: What do some of the New Zealand initiatives for alternative education look like?

2.4.1 Introduction

Whilst there is a paucity of New Zealand literature regarding alternative education programmes, there is reported success in initiatives. Recognition officially began in New Zealand in 1998 when the Ministry of Education started funding such programmes. Student places have been increased since then. Milbank (1999) says that the new policy provides maximum student placements and at the same time gives schools greater flexibility in providing alternative education for at risk students. Funding can be used to provide programmes within the school grounds or off site. Students who drop out of the mainstream system are still retained on high school roles. Mainstream schools use their structure to manage consortiums of providers, and distribute the allocation of finance accordingly. This budget is paid on a student by student basis. Schools are not only responsible for student safety but also the quality of educational provision. In cases where the community organisations run alternative programmes, schools' oversight is needed to satisfy the Education Act requirement that all children aged six to sixteen be enrolled at a registered school (Gerritsen, 1999). Quality control includes regular reporting to the Ministry and the inclusion of a school's alternative education programmes in Education Review Office visits. Considerable enthusiasm from schools for the project was reported by Gerritsen (1999).

2.4.2 The Correspondence School as an individual, distance learning alternative education opportunity for students alienated from the mainstream

In New Zealand the Correspondence School has traditionally provided distance courses for students unable through location or circumstances to attend regular schools. It was an obvious vehicle for supporting students alienated from regular schooling through truancy and suspension. So one of the first arrangements made for alternative education programmes was The Correspondence School. This was considered as "maybe the first choice for some students who are not able to operate effectively within the institutionalised framework of the regular school." (Gerritsen, 1999, p.68). It remains still one of the alternative options for some students. It has however suffered criticism, because by its nature it does not take into account the importance of regular peer interaction, and social aspects of education which are quality conditions indicated necessary for a successful programme. Clark et al., (1996) comments here that reliance on the written word, as with the Correspondence School is probably reliance on the least effective learning style available to students at risk. This is particularly so for students whose ethnicity has oral tradition as a cultural emphasis, Maori and Pacific Islanders in the New Zealand context. Quality interaction is construed as an important factor to offset self-esteem from which the confidence to engage in the risky business of learning is acquired. Maori traditionally prefer social groupings as a learning style. Significantly the connections between subjects are stressed (Metge, 1984). This makes Correspondence

School learning less useful as an alternative learning strategy where students are either through personal style or cultural preference more attuned to oral, face to face learning.

Whilst there may be disadvantages, correspondence schools do however have the advantage of focusing all the attention of the teacher on the student, who is the priority. The individuality and self-validation straight from the teacher are useful attributes of correspondence lessons, said Gerritsen (1999). Where the Correspondence School is used in alternative provision, it attempts a transition between the programme and further training when students “cease to be challenged and are attending the programme simply because they find it comfortable (Gerritsen, 1999, p16). Alternative education initiatives have used the advantages of Correspondence curricula supplemented by art, dance, self-development or vocational programmes, the aim being to help students find their own strengths. The role of the Correspondence School has changed now that the alternative education places have been allocated to schools, however correspondence courses are still available to students. The Education and Science Committee (ESC), (1995) indicated that a full understanding of successful attributes is not helped by a lack of research evidence and called for more to be undertaken to ascertain the efficacy of present provision as well as to gain insight into kura kaupapa Maori policy.

One of the strengths of the Correspondence School is its well-established tradition of delivering academic excellence at a distance, which can be tapped into by alternative educators requiring expertise. The Correspondence School currently has 15 alternative education partnerships around the country, with a total of 82 student places with schools or contracted community organisations (Gerritsen, 1999). None of the partnerships are identical, but are based around a model that sees students receive a programme that is part distance and part face-to-face on the spot education. In Tauranga the Correspondence School has Ministry funding for 4 alternative programmes organised off-site by Tauranga Boys' College which has funding for a further 12 alternative places. Correspondence School has also affiliated directly with community organisations, such as The Creative Learning Scheme in Auckland. Each student's work is truly individual by this method, it also protects students from their peers, which prevents influence on the work produced, as well as no embarrassment for less than satisfactory results. The “self-contained nature of each Correspondence School work booklet which allows students to achieve their goals provides a great deal of satisfaction for alternative education students” (Gerritsen, p.16).

These accolades point to the successful initial support afforded by the Correspondence School to alternative programmes. It is noted that the Correspondence School's role was due to change at the time Gerritsen's paper was written, when the local schools were to take over the enrolment and pastoral care of students. However there was provision for programmes who still wished to continue with this service, (Gerritsen, 1999, p.16).

2.4.3 New Zealand research and anecdotal evidence of effective alternative programmes is minimal

New Zealand's reporting of alternative education programme effectiveness is largely confined to anecdotal and journalistic evidence. Available material points to an ad hoc development according to local needs. There is reported evidence of a high profile of volunteer involvement to support programmes. Gerritsen (1999) cites there has frequently been church financial and volunteer support to set up programmes with some of these private initiatives being linked with the Correspondence School.

2.4.4 Quality in programmes is invested in teachers as a resource

A major aspect of alternative excellence is the teacher as a resource. OECD (1995) "Emphasised particularly the individual student relationship with the teacher" (p.56). The OECD (1995) report on teacher quality cites this is reflected by knowledge of substantive curriculum areas and content, pedagogic skills, repertoire of teaching strategies, reflection and self-critique, empathy and respect, and managerial competence. In this report New Zealand is critiqued as spending time on reform around "what is worth knowing, and how do we measure it" but the ends are always determined by the means, the technologies and pedagogies". "It is the repertoire of teaching methodologies which are the essential tools of the quality teacher" (OECD, 1995, (p.56). Clark et al (1996) say there is a belief that children are becoming more difficult to manage, teachers are teaching to an increased diversity of values and family structures. This needs to be linked to changed training to understand methodologies, both pre-service and in-service, especially to extend the repertoires of secondary teachers whom this affects most and who usually teach one topic. Clark et al. believe more research is recommended on the different ways children learn.

2.4.5 New Zealand programme initiatives

The Moeawatea heritage conservation process: service learning with Kiwi attitude

Harré and Boshier (1999) described a group of socio economically excluded youth working together to restore the house of Rewi Alley as a "service learning" project. "Community service learning" (Eyler & Giles, 1999) is a concept which involves the integration of community service into school curriculums. Through this students acquire practical skills and learn connections with community. Other tasks might be: working all day in an old folks home, cleaning up a beach, tree planting, or restoring a wildlife refuge. The roots of this type of programme known as "service learning" originate from America as a parochial expression of labour. This is where a specific project is completed which requires collaborative effort, over time, towards a common and often higher ideals goal to complete a specific task. It is credited with building self-esteem and job skills. Harré and Boshier report that the project described was uniquely adapted to New Zealand traditions, in its "do it yourself," outdoors, conservationist approach, but reflected the world view of non formal education. "The students responded well to learning and working in a non formal setting freed from the fetters of discipline and other difficulties

that arise from unequal power relationships found in school settings” (Harré & Boshier, p.15). The authors reported that service learning was mostly found in elite schools in Australia and New Zealand, as they are usually on top of formal requirements found in most academic institutions.

The Moeawatea project was especially designed to secure the involvement of excluded youths. This was closely associated with the life of the poet Rewi Alley, and conditions of the winter season closely replicated rigors experienced by this man. Harré and Boshier (1999) say service learning has a recognisable methodology of educational administration, and this was adapted in the project at Moeawatea to an unstructured, dynamic and supportive process.

Daily meetings, facilitated by the students with the leader for consultation addressed issues of collaboration and design of the project. Other benefits cited were:

- working with role models
- students learn insights into themselves and the human condition
- civic responsibility (abstract concepts)
- physical work of a creative kind
- reflection on what was learned
- involvement in a collective process
- problem solving particularly around inclusive issues
- life skills (cooking breakfast en masse)

Harré and Boshier (1999) say this project was unique in that most service learning projects the process is all, in this project the end product is a monument and therefore a continual reminder of the work, but also constantly available to public scrutiny. Haré and Boshier (1999) described the project as “a life transforming experience for some participants,” (p.18). They do not see such projects as “a universal remedy for what ails young people” (p.18). However, “working together on a heritage project that deploys principles of non formal or adult education, yields social benefits and nurtures useful skills” (p.19).

An educated alternative

Gerritsen (1999) reports on an alternative education programme operating in Northland. This particular group used Correspondence School programmes as the basis of their academic study, and were funded according to the alternative education policy. A benefit of this programme is that “community groups often have staff who are good at getting alongside at risk young people. They can provide a setting that students find less threatening, attesting to the systems approach that individuals feel more comfortable in their own communities’ culture, and frequently know the people they are with at school because they interact socially with them or recognise them as members of their own community. This is particularly evident where communities are small, (and is particularly applicable to provincial towns in New Zealand which have very small populations, and was evident in this present programme) (Larner 1997). Success is also expected through

the collaboration of school and community such that expertise is marshalled to provide optimum support. Community groups can also offer programmes with a strong Maori focus which is important given about three quarters of the students involved are Maori (1998) (Gerritsen, 1999).

The creative learning scheme at Manukau

A youth pastor in central Auckland began a programme in 1997 to meet needs of girls not attending school. This service had a group of 15 young people and with initial volunteer effort became so successful that official acceptance gained Ministry of Education alternative education funding in 1998, allowing it to operate four days a week. By 1999 the programme was serving 24 students.

Two hours of Correspondence School work every morning is followed by afternoons that might include art, dance, self-development, or vocational programmes. The programme aims to help students find their own strengths, a direction in life, in training or getting a job. The initiator of the programme notes that none of the students have successfully returned to school, although some have tried. She says, "with some of the students we have definitely made a turn around and some would say the programme would be a turning point in their life," (Gerritsen, 1999, p.16). This is particularly related to the "longer they spend here the more positive they become" (p.16). A great strength has been the Correspondence School professionalism and support. The co-ordinator of the programme estimates 6 months is the minimum period of time a student could be involved and benefit. Important in the programme is the transition to the community. The programme's organisers say there is sometimes "an element of pushing students out of the nest if they cease to be challenged and are attending the programme simply because they find it comfortable" (p.16). At this point an attempt is made to find further training, students can then move on.

Gerritsen (1999) reported such a venture was assessed as successful by numerical growth, from 15 to 24 students being supported, as well as a sense of students becoming more positive the longer they spent there. Also, a student with a 10 year old reading age, progressed to one of 14. The attendance rate had also improved considerably. These suppositions of success are based on extremely low statistics, and are anecdotal, but give some sense of positive arrangements operating within New Zealand.

Christchurch's youth education service

This programme, YES (Youth Education Service) (cited in the article as controversial), serves youth in Christchurch, reported as: "most difficult, troubled, abusive and/or abused students that are referred its way" (Cassie, 1997, p.9). A specialised team of expertise has been brought together to bring about change, including: psychologists, counsellors, nurses, and therapists. As the basis of the programme courses are offered to students in life skills and work experience. The particular philosophy is that alternative education is a parallel system to that of the mainstream. Therefore it was not the intention that these students would eventually return to the mainstream school, where their needs had after all, been unmet. Of particular importance in the programme is the focus on a systems model, which recognises the interconnectedness, and culturally unique nature of local communities. The basis of this is a strong emphasis on family support and involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

- helping "at risk" students remain at school
- offering intensive courses for students whose behaviour disallows them from mainstream classes
- offering schools targeted courses for smaller groups of students on areas from anger management to school survival
- running courses for teachers and team support for a school wanting to review or introduce a new discipline system

When students are referred by schools, parents, youth workers, police or health professionals, students are given a case manager. Whilst this person may not act face-to-face with the student they are responsible for co-ordinating all services the student may require, from family therapy to mental health support. The case manager from the director down is supervised and the whole of management work collaboratively. There are around 25 students involved in normal skills based training as well as specialised social skills training. Average time for student involvement is 8-10 weeks. The programme sets out to:

- remove barriers built up
- teach consequences for bad behaviour
- "fix up" mistakes made
- build a good relationship with at least one staff
- return students to school

The reported success of this programme is attributed to:

- a multidisciplinary approach
- ongoing support, weaned gradually according to student need
- special staff attributes, experience and talent with such groups

Informal assessment of the programme revealed the following strengths:

- having concrete strategies for students to work with
- a “time out option”
- in context courses for staff support
- providing a range of options/strategies/expertise is supportive
- students are not sent away, YES comes in so supportive, and inclusive, not segregated
- does not group difficult students with other difficult students so becomes negative experience rather than a supportive one
- students with self-esteem and identity problems are helped apart from the separate needs of those with behavioural problems.
- parents endorse the programme and network with other parents

One of the schools calling on this service in Christchurch summarised: “You can’t expect 100% success because some students have deep seated problems and need to go on to other institutions but at least it aids making those decisions” (Cassie, 1997, p.10).

2.4.6 Media discussion of issues:

Potential for special advantage

Thomson (1997) writing in *New Zealand Education Review* applauds government action in recognising the issues faced by schools and communities with regard to youth drop-outs. The willingness to take a longer term perspective is hailed as appropriate in terms of the complexity, enormity of the problem. Effectiveness is measured in the model using schools as a solution, specialist teachers, advisers, parents and caregivers. The opportunity of targeting students is important, which has advantage of teachers being free of overly restrictive programmes where students are not requiring this discipline. Teachers being trained in behaviour management skills is again advocated as essential, at the same time guarding against over dependency of teachers on trainers as “fixers”. Thomson cautions against gathering together groups of students with maladaptive behaviours in a group such that they reinforce these negatives. The author cited former strategies using this method which had poor results in student reform. They became impossible to return to the mainstream, and teachers were anyway reluctant for them to do so. Thomson (1997) discusses the policy of withdrawal of students into alternative programmes as “temporary,” and providing a “time out” period, and strategising such that these skills are generalisable to mainstream classrooms. It is also advised that teachers receive support for the return of these students to provide transition. Transitions being supported are a recurrent theme in the literature (Quinn et al., 1999). What has been less frequently mentioned is the importance of physical support into the classroom, such that students feel supported on their return, are gradually weaned off, and the class is not disadvantaged by the teacher requiring to do all the transitional adjustments him/herself (Briggs & Hawkins, 1999). These strategies may well have not been frequently discussed as the perspective is often that it is counterproductive for students to return to the mainstream anyway, despite the fact that this might have been an original intent. Gerritsen (1999), reports Millbank as saying “The idea is that the young person is helped back into mainstream schools. That might take six months before they’re ready for that, sometimes a whole year” (p.16). It is reported that students who are alienated from the

mainstream, are exposed in their new environment to such different educational pedagogies that re-adjustment into the mainstream would entail extreme trauma, particularly as their period in such a programme is often lengthy. In any case they have been alienated from this system, so it is unlikely that they will return to it and suddenly find it conducive to learning. Their best and often only opportunity to connect with learning is in an alternative education programme. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this also reflects on alternative programmes being considered as temporary rehabilitation, rather than them developing a strong effective culture recognised in its own right as an alternative to the mainstream, which is preferable. It is here that the diversity of programmes offered in alternative education may confuse the issue that some only set out to involve a student for 8-10 weeks. The student is still connected to the school, and rehabilitation is possible (Briggs & Hawkins, 1999). However some programmes cater for students who require an alternative approach permanently as the mainstream has not allowed them to learn (Quinn et al.).

An important issue regarding effectiveness of alternative programmes is deemed by Thomson (1997), to be the better preparation of mainstream teachers in terms of a behaviour management component. She says "my conversation with hundreds of teachers and pre-service trainees constantly reinforces the view that teachers do not regard their training in the management of behavioural difficulties as sufficient" (p.15). It is significant that these people are mainstream or potential mainstream teachers. It would be expected that teaching in alternative programmes would require even more of an emphasis on behaviour management skills.

In summary, Thomson (1997) says the new initiative of the government regarding alternative provision has real merit for all participants. The proviso being that those involved will be highly trained in behavioural skills. At the same time they must also be skilled in collaborative consultation with their colleagues in the classroom.

Truancy

An article in the Central Leader focuses on the problem of truancy (Rushworth, 2001). The particular issue addressed is that of keeping track of students who drop out of school. A centralised database of school age children is suggested, which would inform the Ministry. It is reported by the co-ordinator of the Central Cluster Truancy Organisation that employs two truancy officers for 15 hours a week in Auckland, that the system should be co-ordinated on a national level. This would allow more effective usage of programmes in terms of knowing all students are accounted for, and expectations are that young people who are not attending mainstream classes are in alternative ones. This is an issue which has been occupying overseas authorities, tracking students, notably in Sweden (Durand-Drouhin, 1998). "There is confusion over the tracking of children when they move from one school to another...procedures are too regional and need tightening...and the transient population seems to be increasing" (Rushworth, 2001 (p.5). The main problem cited was that when families move they cannot be tracked until they have a request from another school for records, but this may not happen if parents do not

place their children in another school in the new location. Alternative programmes can only be said to be successful if they reach the population they purport to serve.

2.4.7 Summary

New Zealand initiatives largely reflect the same values considered to be important by international standards, in terms of small groups, informal, flexible but structured learning, in settings which are unlike the mainstream, authentic, and encourage warm supportive relationships with significant facilitators. These in turn encourage level social experiences, and give time to the student. Family involvement and a systemic approach is largely prevalent, with an emphasis on making connections and good transitions for student at entry and exit.

The Correspondence School has and does provide strong academic support for many providers in the alternative education field. Despite the problems of isolation experienced, social learning settings operate effectively using this medium.

Concern is expressed, again reflecting overseas experiences that collaboration must be effective for successful programmes. At the same time tracking students is paramount in reaching the whole population with effective programmes.

2.4.8 Ethnicity and alternative education programmes

There is evidence that programmes internationally, have high populations of students of other ethnicity than the one in which the programme is delivered. OECD (1995) reports children at risk come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Manifestations of failure to integrate successfully include ethnic minority status as well as health problems, substance and drug abuse, crime, early pregnancy and unemployment. These students often come from backgrounds of poverty and ethnic minority status. Risk factors are cumulative such that failure may be predicted. The OECD (1995) reports the Netherlands uses a funding formula weighted according to degree of risk status, low socio-economic status. Dutch families receive a waiting of 1.25, Bargees 1.4, Traveller 1.7 and ethnic minorities 1.9, from a baseline of 1.0. Extra staffing is allocated to needy schools, as well as extra resources for co-ordinating activities in liaison with welfare institutions. A similar intervention is noted in Australia, which serves schools with a concentration of students from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances. The additional resources are designed to develop more effective learning through rewarding and relevant schooling and close interaction between the school and the community. Funding is allocated on the basis of need rather than per capita and is generally targeted at the whole school for general improvement. Positive results are reported.

High incidence of ethnic populations are noted in alternative programmes. This is noted in both Literature from Britain and USA (Castleberry & Enger, 1998). The reports do not discuss differentiation between the experiences of the students within the programmes with regard to cultural difference. However it is frequently stated that it is imperative to address cultural needs (Gottfredson, 1997). Central to any learning provision is an

authentic cultural base. The complexities of this issue are discussed in the National Research Bureau Report for the Ministry of Education, (2000), whereby the providers of programmes in New Zealand focus on the Maori culture as a means of instilling a set of values, identity and esteem into the Maori students, who were the predominant ethnicity represented. Donmoyer & Kos, (1993) support this view in describing a quality model of alternative education, where there are strong, consistent linkages among community, home and school, and these play a central role in supporting children and their families in alternative education.

Civikly (1997) suggests teachers need to reflect on the fact that different cultures view the world differently and learning is culturally bound (Vygotsky, 1978). It is well to note culture goes beyond ethnicity. When considering an ethnographic micro-cultural level there is a set of rules values norms and routine behaviour unique to that setting as well as individual differences in student culture being different to that of teachers. Teachers need to be aware that despite serious and objective intent as social beings they are ethnocentric, taking their personal views and schema as the best they have known and are inclined to feel critical of students who do not have the same measurements. These are difficult concepts because what teachers do is proclaim, foster and ideally model, exemplary thought and communication in their particular fields. They tend to encourage and reward those who fulfil their own hopes, and discourage in one way or another those who do not (Civikly).

2.4.9 Initiatives to support Maori within alternative education programmes.

Maori constitute a high proportion of the users of alternative education.

In New Zealand, Maori students constitute a large area of the population as consumers of alternative education programmes. This is affirmed by the Ministry of Maori Development (1996), which quoted the rate of Maori suspension and expulsion, from mainstream classes as 40% of pupils in 1995. Whilst the discussion paper commissioned by Te Puni Kokiri (Clark, Smith & Pomare, 1996) critiqued the regular system in 1996 as contributing to this state of affairs, by its lack of vision and flexibility, it is to be hoped that more recent reform is beginning to address issues for Maori. Hirsh (1990) describes the experience of Maori youth as “early being accustomed to failure at school” (p.69), resulting in an expectation of failure as a normal response. The Race Relations Office report (1988) found a number of reasons were given to explain the reason for Maori high expulsion, these were:

- The mono-cultural nature of some schools
- Lack of cultural awareness , sensitivities of some staff
- Lack of early intervention over a behaviour problem
- Guidance counselling not being offered or not culturally appropriate
- Suspension being used as discipline in the first case
- Unacknowledged underlying problems of pupils remaining over time

The report concludes with recommendations focussing on developing a culturally appropriate guidance counselling system, so students have a “good fit” with their support personnel. At the same time it is expedient that there is an early involvement of counsellors, when the problem has not intensified. Additionally, the involvement of parents and whanau at an early stage is advised when problems first become apparent. The retraining of counsellors in culturally appropriate procedures and support for Maori is needed. Kingswell High School in Invercargill was reported as having developed innovative approaches to supporting their Maori students in a Maori way, notably by the institution of the Youth Support Scheme involving kaumatua assistance (Race Relations Office, 1988).

In terms of addressing this problem there are specific features of alternative education programmes that particularly accommodate Maori learning needs, which are different from the mainstream approach that has frequently failed to connect them with learning. The focus of alternative programmes is a different delivery in a different environment. Features reflect community culture, collaborative decision making and the importance of close meaningful relationships.

Alternative educators place high priority on a significant relationship between teacher and student, which is sensitive to cultural needs

One of the main issues for Maori students is the need to have teachers who support a cultural match, which is inclusive of Maori values. Many teachers are not Maori and require training to support a sensitivity and understanding of how different cultures tend towards specific ways of learning, and learning can be more effective when this is responded to (Metge, 1984). At the same time it is reported that non-Maori facilitators may require support and training beyond specific cultural support. Briggs & Hawkins found “Some female European-New Zealand facilitators experienced difficulties with groups of Pacific Island and Maori youths as they felt intimidated and threatened when the young people sensed their inexperience and resultant lack of confidence” (p.43). Behaviour management and conflict resolution are frequently reported requirements for all educators working with young people in alternative programmes. There is a desperate need to train more Maori for the role (Clark et al., 1996). This need is directly in support of social learning theory, in which Vygotsky (1978) describes that optimum transmission of knowledge is through ethnically similar world views.

The teacher is an important resource in effective Maori education initiatives

Te Puni National Manager Maori Education ERO, (Clark et al, 1996) said it is the quality of the teacher student interaction which makes all the difference in Maori student achievement. The form and structure of education delivery was not as significant as the process employed to effect learning, safety and security in the environment. This occurs through limits being defined consistency and relationships. He says the calibre of the teacher and relationships of teacher to student are actually the critical components. However “Maori delivering to Maori, and Maori managing that process do not necessarily guarantee improved educational performance by young Maori” (Clark et al. 1996 p.74). Problems reside where some Maori teachers are involved “The quality of some was seen to be poor where Maori were prevailed upon to take subjects beyond Te reo.” (p75) This has implications for delivery, and shows that while consideration should be given to a good cultural match in terms of building consistent, reciprocal relationships this is also overshadowed by issues of teacher training competence.

Clark et al. (1996) indicate there are major issues around upskilling Maori teachers in the light of the small population. The PPTA does not believe that the solution lies in lowering entry standards just to ensure that the supply of Maori teachers is boosted (Clark et al. 1996).

“Quality teachers can produce quality results. While aroha, care, concern, and dedication are admirable qualities to possess and manifest they are no substitute for professional expertise in teaching methodologies in student management and in the grasp of one or more bodies of knowledge” (Clark et al. 1996, p80).

Maori frequently are in lower socio-economic groupings and students may require basic survival support

Te Puni Kokiri, Clark, Smith & Pomare (1996) in considering measures that need to be taken to ensure quality alternative education provision for Maori students embraced a holistic approach. They reported that students need firstly to be provided with the basic needs of life, before any educational activities can be initiated. This means issues both outside and inside the school domain need addressing, such as physical disabilities, poor diet, lack of sleep, low self-esteem, poor motivation, learning barriers and teacher student ratios, the structure and content of the curriculum, as well as the length of the school day and holidays. Unless survival needs are addressed students are unable to connect with learning.

Family and whanau involvement in supporting students and the programme is essential

Maori and other students are more successful in alternative settings when they have family support for this. This is particularly in providing reinforcement for the programme's values. McKinley (2000) quotes “Its important just to see that their parents turn up and knowing that their parents know they get homework and they will go home

and do it at home as a reinforcer. So if the parents and I are basically on the same whaka then the kids know where they are at. It's the inconsistency where the kids fall off a little bit." (p.144). McKinley (2000) says whilst Maori and Pakeha secondary school teachers have similar experiences of Maori parental home support such as showing an interest and helping with homework there were different approaches from teachers. Notably Pakeha teachers did not attempt to meet socially, informally which has the effect of "providing an opportunity for them to experience a different side to the teacher in situations where Maori parents feel comfortable" (p.144).

Success in Kura kaupapa Maori schools may be transferable for drop out students in alternative programmes

The OECD, 1994 committee reported that Maori students who were in kura kaupapa programmes were performing well, and there was a need to determine whether they could adapt entry criteria to absorb at risk students into the programmes. There was however not enough evidence to support reasons for success, although it was suggested that students performed well due to parent involvement, acceptance and expectations as much as because of techniques used. This may be a future route for some Maori students when there is more research information available.

Alternative education issues are commensurate with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi

A community model reflects the principles of Treaty of Waitangi partnership because of its recognition of preferred style. This is commensurate with the multi-disciplinary, community approach used in the provision of alternative education programmes. Clark, Pomare, & Smith (1996) say in their review "The role of parents was seen to be critical in any scheme to raise the educational attainment of Maori and particularly children at risk" (p.75). Further the child from two cultures will need to be given learning opportunities which will allow him/her to bring these two cultures together in some way. Children are often able to solve the problem of cultural differences. "It is very important that somebody (gives) him the opportunity to do that" (Clay, 1985, p.14). In Maori democratic processes primacy is given to consent and communal decision making. It is regarded as desirable that everyone have their say irrespective of the time required. Important decisions should be made with full public knowledge and discussion. Maori practice, essential for the culturally appropriate learning style for Maori children is only able to operate at the times and places where Maori people have sufficient control, which is often constrained by society limiting time available.

Metge (1984) says some traditional Maori perspectives and approaches to education are applicable to many Polynesian cultures. The co-operation of learner and teacher as a single enterprise that forms a holistic approach is one of these. Significantly the connections between subjects are stressed. This is difficult to achieve in traditionally structured secondary approaches where one subject teacher has no knowledge of what has been taught in another subject area. Learning in a whanau grouping and shared knowledge are required if Maori students needs are to be met. Such strategies are

compatible with the approach often taken within alternative education settings. Other examples of mismatch of process and outcome between what is offered in mainstream situations and what Maori students need, suggests a compatibility with individualised alternative settings with whanau groups, and one significant teacher.

Maori alternative education initiatives

Te Puni Kokiri selected nine alternative programmes participants of which were approached for interviews. They ranged from rural to central South Auckland city groups. From the types of programmes visited and the characteristics surveyed, the authors found programmes had been established to address very diverse needs, and noted it was difficult to separate the learning or educational needs from the social and personal needs of some of the students (Clark et al., 1996). Comparative needs for the Maori groups were vastly different. Some teachers were Maori some were not. All held very firm views on the cultural needs of students and the need for taha Maori in the programmes. But the emphasis itself was rehabilitative and individualised. It came through the curriculum but was not embedded in the culture of the classroom. This was most noted where there was strong Maori community support and funding through kura kaupapa Maori. Although there were Maori support staff and the students were mainly Maori, the teacher was clearly in charge and was instilling a set of values which was based on the individual needs of the students. There was also a view expressed that disliked the labeling of programmes as Maori, which they felt added another dimension of disadvantage. The schools were attempting to reinforce the positive to stem negative community response for the programmes. Effective programmes were seen to be at risk by community intolerance and at that time uncertainty that Ministry funding would continue.

Clark et al., (1996) note that Maori students are not a homogeneous group with singular needs. The major need however for successful programmes for Maori was seen to be more positive secondary curriculum support for the diverse needs they have. This was particularly focused on Correspondence School work which was inadequate. Clark et.al, explain that if these courses are to be used for so many of the Maori students then they need to be exposed to the wider world. "It would appear that not only is that objective not being met appropriately, but the students are not being given sufficient skills to understand and explore their own world" (p.95).

Successful elements of Maori initiatives according to Clark et al., (1996) were characterised by :

- Success was related to Maori parents' aspirations to keep their children at home enough to reinforce a pattern of continued learning
- Parent support for programmes
- Successful students took control of their own learning, and were self motivated.
- Student commitment: "I measure the success of this programme in getting them here first...it's good catching them, but making them come is a different thing. Making them stay is a different thing" (Clarke et. al., 1996).

- Resolution of social and personal difficulties, enough to return to the mainstream, or work
- A high positive community image... “To win over Joe Public you’ve got to hang in there and be as charming and as diplomatic as you can possibly be...(Clarke et al., 1996).
- Intimacy and smallness of settings
- Same teacher daily contact, safety and security
- Individual programmes
- Boundaries and structure

The authors noted that there were many issues which required attention and support in the programmes, related to issues of attendance, courses and staffing which was inadequate professionally as well as untrained. The community was not always accepting of what programmes were doing and the above issues were exacerbating a positive view.

2.4.10 Summary

The high percentage of Maori represented in alternative education programmes is attributed frequently to the failure of the mainstream to respond to particular needs associated with ethnicity and learning styles. One of the major aims of alternative programmes is to be “unlike mainstream” education, because for some students this delivery has not been successful. The fact that many of the features of successful alternative programmes are compatible with preferred approaches for Maori to connect with learning is encouraging. Relationships have a high priority, with teachers, and family involvement as a key support factor.

Part 5: Conclusion

2.5.1 The effectiveness of alternative education programmes

It has been frequently said that the main issue in determining quality components of alternative education programmes is the diversity, which is crucial, but makes evaluation difficult. Where characteristics have been researched according to Raywid (1994), these have focused more on organisational structure than educational outcomes, so this has further contributed to a poor empirical understanding of overall effectiveness of alternative education, particularly where associated with at risk youth, but there are numerous reports on “effective” characteristics. Raywid (1994) and Neumann (1994) pinpoint that many of the characteristics parallel with expectations for mainstream education.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) (1999) of Australia, in reviewing the findings and outcomes of research related to early school leavers, identified specific issues as crucial. The matter is so complex because there is no such thing as a typical student. Not all pupils leaving early are negative. The major issues perceived are the monitoring of fragmented services at a local level. Yet positive change, especially at a local level needs to be the result of multi-disciplinary co-operation, and totally related to the individual nature of community and student.

Clark et al. (1996) perceived quality programme provision as effective distribution of resources to complement the problem of dysfunctional students who need an altogether higher cost of delivery, and otherwise may suffer a curtailed curriculum. Quality is seen in the autonomy to develop the school in ways that best suit individuals.

Glasser (1992) believes that in terms of the economy, the educational system can no longer tolerate dropouts and poor workmanship. As in a business, the public and pupils pay for prisons welfare and reform. Unfortunately excuses that students cannot perform because they are the products of dysfunctional families or are from poverty backgrounds, just serve to reinforce to the student and system that failure is then inevitable. Schools therefore need to find ways for students to succeed so they have a sense of mastery over their own lives. In this the leadership and support of management in alternative education systems will help teachers to have expectations that their students are all individuals who can experience quality learning to their own potential.

Effective alternative education programmes take a holistic view of the student and are entirely responsive to an individual view. In determining quality outcomes for students in alternative programmes it is recognised that no universal panacea will fit all contexts. Schools will need to gather and analyse information about their own situation and help to develop their own responses to locally identified needs (Shaw, 1998). Whilst the diversity of provision makes it difficult to evaluate outcomes, it is also important to preserve this individuality which is unique to the culture of the specific community in which it operates, and is necessary to provide quality provision for meeting the needs of so many different students (Friedrich, 1997).

In order for there to be quality delivery in programmes, it is first necessary to establish an environment which is inviting, nurturing and consistent, where students feel secure and comfortable and are therefore prevailed upon to attend the programme on a regular basis (Gottfredson, 1997). This will not happen automatically, but will require the dedicated efforts of a team of alternative educators. It will need to be responsive to the particular students being served, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, interests and achievement levels. It may also require the provision of essentials, such as meals and transport to the programme. These basic requirements for learning, need first to have been satisfied before students can advance in a curriculum. However, it is important that students do move on once they are attending regularly. Programmes need to emphasise activities that incorporate numeracy and literacy in an authentic way need to extend students, rather than encouraging stagnation through lack of stimulation. A wide variety of activities needs to be presented, and opportunities taken to use community facilities, and specialist skills, so that students are in no way disadvantaged languishing in a reduced curriculum which is discriminatory as well as de-motivating. When subjects and activities are presented in meaningful, and creative ways, in smaller groups with empathetic staff, students do respond and gain confidence, which lays a foundation for further progress (Parkinson, 1998). In quality provision, this will be carefully monitored through diagnostic assessment (Broadfoot, 1992). Students will be encouraged to self-evaluate and take charge of their own learning, thus developing self-efficacious skills which will self-motivate and eventually connect them with vocational opportunities.

It is evident that the successfulness of the transition between the mainstream experience and the alternative classroom determines how effectively students adjust to the programme (Quinn et al., 1999). This is just as important when school days are over, and students need to move into further study or vocations. All the supportive effort of the alternative education programme will be lost unless there is an easing into independence. Both these transitions need to be acknowledged as important, and also well managed by the programme organisers.

The major determinant of the quality programme is well trained staff who have the skills, but also experience and the favourable temperament to work with students who have not succeeded in mainstream situations (Anderson et al. 1986). Teachers in alternative programmes require specialist skills. These are additional and complement their role, which is qualitatively different from that of the mainstream teacher. It includes, counselling, managing a team of educators, liaising with the community, vocational and educational networks, police and judiciary, and health professionals, and students' families. Whilst some of these features appear in the job descriptions of mainstream teachers, in alternative education they are a daily occurrence. There is considerable emphasis on the team effort, as each educator has a specific role to play, and relies on colleagues for their support, on a daily basis to sustain their own health and safety requirements, as well as run quality programmes. Educators work at different levels in quality programmes. An absolute requirement is frequent effective communication between all programme providers in order to network, formulate provision, and discuss issues. There is a need in this for professional leadership and management from

principals and other managing staff. Highly qualified teachers lead, role model and guide educators who have specific skills, and are recognisable members of the community. They work with the students at the coal face, participating in their activities, providing them with meals, transport, friendship, activities and links with the community. These individuals ideally require practical training to support their specific role, as empathy and friendship, whilst important, are no substitute for professional expertise (Clark et al. 1996). The main issue here is that quality programmes require teaching professionals to be trained, at whatever level, in courses that are consistent with an authentic alternative education curriculum rather than one designed for mainstream educators.

Educators, no matter how qualified cannot operate effectively without the support of a considerable team of multi-disciplinary professionals, in health, welfare and social control services. These groups have specific areas of expertise which are not necessarily the domain of the teacher. Disciplines need to be well defined, so that students receive maximum professionalism from those whose work it is to provide specialised knowledge.

In secondary schooling, where having specialist subject teachers usually means students have more fragmented relationships with them. This is not a suitable situation for students in alternative programmes, who need ideally to work in an established close relationship with one empathetic teacher. Quality programmes will provide for this such that relationships remain optimal with one teacher, but that students are not disadvantaged by being denied specialist subject tuition and opportunities.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes the interconnectedness of communities. The ideal alternative education programme recognises the importance of strengthening networks within the community, with families, and peers as well as organisations. This is essential for the various types of help individual students will require, and it is all within a framework of the culture of the students' own neighbourhood. It is important to make links with families and integrate them wherever possible into the programme. The family is a unique unit, which is not replaced by programmes. As participants in programmes families provide reinforcement and routines for their children, as well as upskilling themselves. This inclusion is advantageous to students in terms of their parents' or relatives' understanding of educational goals, and improved parenting behaviours. At the same time, Brody et al. (2001) say connecting such families supports socialisation and ultimately benefits communities. There is an important role for more research to inform, and provide insights for policy makers and practitioners into the adequacy and effectiveness of the provision of alternative education programmes. Lloyd Smith & Davies (1995) said the quality and effectiveness of measures adopted to deal with them affect the students' long-term educational and personal welfare as well as the long-term costs through later intervention and support. This speaks of communities being in control of their own outcomes, for mutual benefits.

Section Three: Research components

3.1 Background

As a means of identifying the perceptions of key informants associated with the implementation of alternative education programmes with a view to developing a set of quality indicators of alternative education a research design that triangulated three sets of data was developed. The strength of triangulation has been described as a research technique that enables data to be viewed from multiple perspectives and in turn verified (Neumann, 1984). Within the design the main themes arising from a review of the literature on alternative education were used to develop a series of focus group questions. In turn thematically analysed focus group responses were used to develop a set of potential quality indicators. Telephone surveying was then used to verify the indicators. The details of each part of the triangulation procedure are now outlined describing the different groups of participants and how they were selected. The findings of each stage are also presented leading to the final suggested list of quality indicators relevant to the development and implementation of alternative education programmes.

3.2 Stage One: Overall selection of participants

In consultation with the Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education, it was decided that a cross section of staff involved with Alternative Education programmes throughout New Zealand would be invited to participate in a series of focus groups as well as telephone survey interviews. As a result the study population was drawn from staff involved at various levels of alternative education provision, inclusive of consortium membership and “hands on” staff within the alternative education programmes.

There were three consortium groups involved in the focus group interviews and six different consortiums for the telephone survey. These consortiums and by association alternative provider sites were selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education. The respective managing schools of the consortiums all had slightly different arrangements adapted to meet local need. The geographic location of the three consortium groups for the focus groups covered: one in a major North Island City; a second in a North Island Provincial Township; and a third in South Island City. Consortiums groups that were involved in the telephone surveys consisted of three from the North Island and three from the South Island.

3.3 Stage Two: Reviewing the literature

In analysing the major themes that arose from a review of the literature, the following areas were identified as worthy of exploration within a New Zealand context: the components of an alternative quality education programme; the attributes of staff that work successfully as alternative education providers; the part that family played in the provision of quality programmes; and how to support students to become less alienated from the learning process as a result of being involved in alternative education provision.

3.4 Stage Three: The focus group interviews

3.4.1 Overall strategy for selection of focus group participants

The Ministry of Education wrote to the selected managing schools of alternative education programmes informing them that the Ministry had contracted Auckland College of Education to conduct research into what constituted successful alternative provision. The managing school was informed that the Ministry had selected it to be invited to participate and that the research team from Auckland College of Education would forward further information on the project.

The principal of each managing school was then written to by the research team and an information sheet outlining both the purpose of the project and what would be expected if the school choose to participate. For a copy of the information sheet see Appendix A. The Principal was then rung to see if approval was to be given for the school to participate. If not the research team was to go back to the Ministry for another school to be nominated. If the school accepted to participate then the principal or co-ordinator of the alternative education programme consortium was to be asked to nominate up to five consortium schools that in their opinion have been successful in terms of meeting student needs through alternative education provision. At this point the researchers became aware that different consortiums operated differently and the methodology was adapted to the particular circumstances of each managing school which nevertheless still involved the distribution of information sheets. For a copy of the information sheet that was used to inform consortium schools and alternative education providers see Appendix B.

All information sheets also alerted the participant that at a later stage there would be a telephone survey to verify a set of indicators that had arose from the outcomes of the focus group meetings. It was also made clear that it would be a different set of consortium schools and associated alternative providers that would be approached to participate in the telephone survey.

The participants

North Island city consortium

The North Island City managing school co-ordinator, had been seconded to co-ordinate two other managing schools' cluster programmes as well as their own. The resulting five consortium schools nominated, consisted of two management schools, and three consortium schools according to the original alternative providers. The North Island management school reported that the consortium schools were in fact not usually in contact with the providers. They had given authority to the managing school to "manage" the providers, and generally provide all communication. Information sheets were sent to the Consortium schools as indicated in the methodology, with an alteration, in terms of they were invited to send a representative, but were not requested to provide a list of quality providers, as this was the prerogative of the managing school. The managing

school had also been given the jurisdiction to give organisational consent for the project to operate with regard to the provider area of the cluster model. The model also differed from some others, in that the programmes were being taught on the school campuses, but in a separate unit.

The 10 participants who attended the focus group covered the following categories: five participants were in managerial roles: two principals of managing schools; two in consortium co-ordinating roles and one alternative school based provider. A further five were hands on staff associated with the provision of alternative education programmes.

North Island provincial township consortium

The second managing school, was in a provincial township, and had four consortium schools in its cluster. The co-ordinator from the managing school had the entire responsibility of the area, formalised by “letters of agreement” from the Consortium Schools, through to the arranging of providers of alternative education programmes on their behalf. The eleven participants who attended the focus group covered: four principals/co-ordinators of managing schools; six alternative education provider representatives; and one specialist staff member who visited on a regular basis.

South Island city consortium

The third managing school, a city in the South Island of New Zealand, had set up a management committee which was aligned with a Youth Justice Project, and described as “a loose affiliation of community personnel closely associated with alternative education,” inclusive of lawyers, community law enforcement, youth aid and social workers. This committee was chaired by the manager of the management school. The 13 participants who attended the focus groups covered: one co-ordinator from the managing school and 12 representatives from alternative community providers.

3.4.2 Developing the focus group interview schedule

The focus group interview schedule was developed to probe a series of areas that had been identified in the literature as underpinning successful outcomes for alternative education programmes. The four major areas probed within the focus groups related to the programme; provider attributes; family involvement and student support. In relation to the first area of the programme the probes were used associated with the environment, culture and safety; curriculum; sports and leisure activities and transition. In relation to what makes for a good teacher/educator probes were used as they related to personal attributes; training; support structures and networks. For the third area of the part that families/whanau could play in successful alternative education provision the areas probed were collaboration, support structures and cultural links. For the fourth area of student support the areas to be probed were communication, cultural aspects, peer support; professional support; the individual and the environment. For a copy of the interview schedule see Appendix C.

3.4.3 Conducting the focus groups

All three focus groups were held in venues independent of the consortium and alternative education programme sites. The first focus group held was associated with the North Island City Consortium; the second with that of the North Island Provincial Township and the third with that of the South Island City Consortium. The procedure for all three focus groups was as follows although the research team debriefed after each meeting on the procedure and made some minor amendments to improve the facilitation.

Participants were invited to attend for one and a half hours, preliminaries being registration and morning tea. Information sheets and a schedule of the focus group questions were made available to the participants on arrival. There was a welcome, with one of the research team acting as facilitator inviting the participants to introduce themselves. The process was then explained, with consent forms being subsequently signed (see Appendix D) previously an organisational consent form had been signed by the participant's relevant organisation (see Appendix E). Participants were reminded that whilst confidentiality could not be guaranteed in an open forum, confidentiality would be guarded within the written document (Munford & Sanders 2001). The focus group discussion was recorded on audio cassettes, as well as minutes being taken. At the beginning of the session following discussion of the information sheet participants were asked to sign a consent form within which they agreed to have the discussion audio recorded. All tapes were then transcribed.

3.4.5 Coding procedures

The transcription data of the three focus groups was subjected to reliability checks, by being compared to the minutes taken at the focus groups (Silverman, 2000). In coding the transcriptions of the focus group interviews a system of open, axial and selective coding was used (Strauss, 1987). One of the researchers was responsible for the open coding, where the basic themes of the discussion as they related to each category of question were selected from the transcripts. The researcher was then joined by a second member of the research team who had attended all three focus groups. They worked independently on axial coding, where the axis between codes both within and between the categories of question was made and a collapsed list of coding categories produced. On examination each researcher had developed a similar list. From the list they independently selected a final list of codes to be developed into indicator statements of quality alternative education programmes. There was 100 percent reliability between those codes selected. These codes were then written as a series of indicator statements of quality alternative education programmes to be verified through the planned Telephone Survey.

3.4.6 Results of the focus groups

The focus group material was collated, coded and synthesised into the following five categories each with an accompanying set of indicator statements that arose from the coding of the focus group data.

1. CATEGORY ONE: PLACE WHERE THE PROGRAMME OPERATES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- a) **Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed.**
- b) **Students have a choice of programme** because of the different "flavour" approach by different providers, YMCA, marae etc. to suit individual students' needs.
- c) **The physical environment is unlike school**, being informal with couches, tables, stereo, etc. It is "like home", and may be home for some.
- d) **The guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to** with communication, and regular networking routinely occurring.
- e) **Resources are well distributed, and equitable, and funding is accountable.**

Voice of focus group participants

As a means of hearing the voice of the participants listed below, each set of indicators are several quotes that arose within the focus group discussion. These quotes (four in each section), have been selected as indicative of the perceptions of the members of the focus group, as they relate to the environment. Note that each quote is accompanied by a number that indicates which focus group it arose within, as well as a reference to the relevant numbered indicator. One refers to a North Island city; 2 to North Island provincial and 3 to a South Island city.

Voice of focus group participants

A positive atmosphere where tutors ...have time to listen and are not constrained by timetables (1)(Refers to indicator a)

(Choice is important) you've got four different providers, all with slightly different flavours, different emphases, different people and students will find the group they can work with and sometimes they move (2) (Relates to indicator b)

Our students are probably 80% or 90% Maori, so we make a conscious effort to try and design a physical environment that attracts them, simulation of the cultural heritage (in the room). I put up posters and paintings and art work which is done by Maori using Maori motifs. I'm conscious (that) unless a teacher is really on to it and sensitive to those things that the mainstream school tends to reflect more of a Eurocentric design.(2) (Relates to indicator c)

The course is the most stable thing in their lives...consistent everyday with staff (who are) friendly and trusting them...which leads to self-esteem and an intact identity (3). (Relates to indicator d)

2. CATEGORY TWO: STUDENTS WHO ATTEND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- a) **Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme** such that the student wants to attend and bring their “mates”.
- b) **Students' achievement and success are valued** by evidence of student ownership, self-image and negotiated ground rules.
- c) **There is recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group** as a complex developmental lifestage for students, particularly with regard to social relationships.
- d) **There is evidence that offending is reduced.**

Voice of focus group participants

To me the single biggest indicator is attendance, these are kids who you look back at their school record and they've been chronic truants from primary school, yet they're attending these programmes. (2) (Relates to indicator a)

Most of them come in with a really low reading level, but they've got a good vocabulary, which is interesting. They learn they are actually capable of doing something because they've been told for a very long time that they are useless little whatever's, and all of a sudden they are valuable people. They've learned that they can learn (1). (Relates to indicator b).

Getting used to Health Professionals is really hard for them (2) (Relates to indicator c).

(It's) been a major positive for the city because the youth offending has dropped just purely because they actually have to be somewhere...you've got to rebuild these other things which the schools don't provide before you can get to that stage because once on their courses their attitudes change (3) (Relates to indicator d).

3. CATEGORY THREE: CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- a) **A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn** such as, daily transportation, provision of food, emotional needs.
- b) **Literacy and numeracy are crucial aspects** and specialists are employed to teach them.
- c) **Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals**, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended, with strategising to prevent belittling from peers to whom "being dumb" may be "being cool".
- d) **There is a range of supporting subjects** which also integrate literacy and numeracy, such as: lifeskills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym and sports.
- e) **There are challenging activities which build success and confidence**, and help students take ownership, particularly geographic regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools, and self-esteem.
- f) **There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce**, using prior knowledge of student achievement levels, tutor support and peer mentors as well as a gradual lessening of support prior to leaving for work or vocational training, also when students leave at night.
- g) **Group teaching methods are used** rather than formal "chalk and talk" teaching, allowing for social learning activities, communication, problem solving, discussion, busy chatter, with reduced social barriers, such as status of staff.
- h) **There are very small groupings of students, and one to one interaction to provide individual attention.**
- i) **Activities proceed at a slower pace**, with timetables that are flexible to allow time to deal with problems, talk, and discuss informally.
- j) **Activities are varied, and changing constantly** both outdoor and indoor, using management school, community and, regional facilities in order that students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
- k) **There are routines, boundaries, and consistency**, with regard to the structure of the day.
- l) **Cultural issues are addressed**, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
- m) **Safety management procedures are followed** with regard to programmes and equipment (scissors, cooking tools, kayaking, school responsibility).

Voice of focus group participants

Students come from mainly lower socio-economic groups. Just knowing that they are going to have takeaways or something, you'll get the numbers...a fair number just comes in for food (1) (relates to indicator a)

Literacy and numeracy we think are chronic. Those are the major issues for a lot of kids...(1) (Relates to indicator b).

It's really difficult to expect a tutor to teach academic stuff when really there is so much happening in their lives that you really need to address first. Because there are no short cuts...you have to address each thing whether it's a social inability or whether its a whanau problem...first you've got to deal with those issues before you can expect to sit down and do maths. It's a definite process and you've got to have the ability to assess what is happening (2) (Relates to indicator c).

There was a feeling of being intimidated or lost and sort of anonymous in a school setting...so ...we find when they go to alternative ed. They start to breathe because the tutors have time for them (3) (Relates to indicator h).

4. CATEGORY FOUR: PROVIDERS, A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF INDIVIDUALS: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, CO-ORDINATORS, TEACHERS, TUTORS, HEALTH, WELFARE, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION PROFESSIONALS IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- a) **Such programmes have strong links to support structures**, which include the principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid), such that a network of colleagues, are in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- b) **There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively**, organising aspects of the programme working at different levels, a significant person who is both mentor and role model, with an empathetic consistent relationship with students as well as trained educational advisers.
- c) **Staff can relate well to students** and are their helpers, mentors, supporters, and advocates.
- d) **Training is viewed as crucial for teachers**, to provide pedagogical and curriculum expertise, as well as professional supervision, so that there is a body of staff who are trained teachers.
- e) **These teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream**, because their teaching role is qualitatively different. This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counselling, and behaviour management, often requirements on a daily basis.
- f) **As well as trained teachers there are tutors/alternative educators** who have a range of attributes to enhance life skills. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care

of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with "wayward" youth. In quality programmes they will be in-service trained for their particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.

- g) **All staff have effective self management skills**, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.
- h) **Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes** need to be supported by the staff person with whom the students have a close relationship and who has experience in behaviour management, such that there is effective teaching in specialist subject areas.
- i) **The male female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role models**, and solutions for student needs re abuse, rape, sexual orientation.
- j) **Government policy and support are evident** by provision of adequate communication, and resources, as well as recognition of teacher qualification and function by parity in secondary salaries.

Voice of focus group participants

I already have a relationship with them or another sibling or member of the family and I'm trusted by them and the family. They don't see me as someone outside (2) (Relates to indicator a).

When I did teacher training there was not an alternative education strength, and I did technology or something (2) (Relates to indicator d).

Two types of educators are discussed, trained teachers, and alternative educators: Trained teachers are described as: 'We need these people for academic teaching and advisory. But they (need specific training to) level the status (between them and the students). They should learn how to establish personal relationships a lot better' (3) (Relates to indicator e).

Educators are described as: "Good tutors at grass roots, they've been there, they've done it, they've been in gangs, they know what they are going to get into before the kids get in there...These guys are full on and are bouncing off the young people...you've got to be young at heart"(3) (Relates to indicator f).

5. CATEGORY FIVE: FAMILIES PROVIDE A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT AND SET OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT CANNOT BE DUPLICATED BY A PROGRAMME IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- a) **A relationship is developed with students' families**, no matter what the structure, or circumstances of the situation. It is acknowledged that sometimes family circumstances are contributory to student difficulties by programme educators.
- b) **Support for the family includes identifying a key member, in order to communicate effectively with the family**, home visits, and involving family members on their own terms in their areas of expertise, gardening, hearing students read, gym work, putting down a hangi.
- c) **There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student**, such that an understanding of the programme will enlist parent participation at home to reinforce programme routines goals and boundaries, and student progress and achievements are recognised.
- d) **Families are participants in the programme** learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.
- e) **Student work is seen to be valued** both by educators, peers and families, by newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.

Voice of focus group participants

Most kids come from homes with great poverty and the poverty and home issues pull them back from the learning environment, so if they can get away from that (there is some chance for success)(3) (Relates to indicator a).

Oh God, he goes to speak to my Mum, he knows what I have been doing, just small things are important, just by making sure their child gets up in the morning is really important, because that also shows a child that the parent is interested in what they are doing (2) (Relates to indicator c).

Parents come along to the gym. (one) comes and works out with the boys, he took a couple of boys over and he does martial arts as well, and that was really cool, because I think (its good) parents being involved with tutors (3) (Relates to indicator d).

Feedback can have a positive effect: "They are used to coming in when the Principal tells them something is wrong (refers to mainstream experience), Its good to get a home call that says, "Hey, Johnny today was awesome". You are going to create something at home for the whole family...it actually affects the whole family and has a snowball effect (3) (Relates to indicator e).

3.4.7 Host verification of outcomes of the focus group in relation to the suggested list of indicators

Post the focus group meetings, all participants were sent a summary of the proceedings in the form of the list of indicators (see Appendix F). In order to provide reliability by respondent verification (Silverman, 2000) the participants upon receipt of the summaries,

could make contact with the nominated researchers if they wished to discuss any points. Two participants from each of the three focus groups were telephoned to verify the summaries as a true record of the focus group proceedings. These participants were selected by being the first and last participants to register on the Focus Group day. In all cases the indicators were verified and no consistent suggestions for change were identified.

3.5 Stage Four: Telephone survey

3.5.1 Selection of participants

At completion of verification, prospective participants for the Telephone Survey were invited to take part. The selection of management schools had been made by the Ministry of Education. Six consortiums groups were selected: three in the North Island and three in the South Island. In the North island the consortiums were representative of two cities and one provincial township and in the South Island a similar pattern was repeated. Principals and co-ordinators were originally approached, to invite them to take part in the project, and gain organisational consent. At the same time the principals/co-ordinators were requested to select two providers of quality alternative education programmes who would be willing to take part in a telephone interview. The schools had known about the project, as they received general information informing them of the project at its inception from the Ministry of Education. Once providers had been selected, and verbal agreement had been made for them to take part, the project sent them invitations, information sheets (see Appendices G & H) and consent forms (see Appendices I & J), with a copy of the telephone survey (see Appendix K). Negotiations were then started to set up appropriate interview times. No interviews were undertaken unless a signed consent form had been returned to the research office.

3.5.2 Development of telephone survey

The survey incorporated the indicators that had arisen out of the focus group interviews and had been verified post interview by members of the respective focus groups. Within the survey these indicators were presented as indicator statements and respondents were asked to rate their level of importance using a five point Likert scale (see Appendix K) for the provision of quality alternative education. Overall there were 37 statements that the respondent was asked to rate.

3.5.3 Administering the telephone survey

Twenty respondents made themselves available. The two researchers undertook to survey 10 each of the participants by telephone. The first 10 participants to respond were interviewed by one researcher, the other researcher took the next 10 respondents. All participants received in the mail the interview questions and rating scale prior to the interview.

Interviews took between 15- 50 minutes. Each interviewer checked that the interviewee had the interview materials in front of them and then proceeded to ask the questions about how important they saw the identified indicators in the implementation of quality alternative education programmes. A set script was used that included prompts if the respondent hesitated. On a Likert scale of five ratings: “very important” was given a rating of 1; “important”, 2; “neutral”, 3; “little importance” 4; “not important” 5; and 6 was “don’t know”. Both researchers had given one another feedback on their telephone interviewing skills.

The final question of the telephone interview was open-ended asking the respondent to comment upon any other features of quality alternative education programmes that were not covered by the statements they had been asked to rate. Several participants commented on the thorough coverage of the characteristics of quality alternative programmes as covered within the indicator statements, and said they really found it difficult to add anything but took the opportunity to discuss some indicators in further depth. The overall impression of the interviewers was that the interviewees gave considered responses assisted by receiving the information ahead of the set interview time.

3.5.4 Analysis of the telephone survey responses

The individual responses to the alternative education indicators were entered onto an excel spread sheet and the means, standard deviations and frequencies were calculated for each of the 37 indicators using SPSS V10.0. See Appendix L for a full description of the statistical analysis and outcomes including line graphs that supported the conclusion that the large majority of indicators were seen as either “very important” or “important”. Table 3.1 differentiates between these two levels across the five indicator areas of: programme, student, curriculum, providers and family.

Table 3.1

RATINGS OF INDICATORS OF TELEPHONE SURVEY

THE PLACE WHERE THE PROGRAMME OPERATED.

The following indicators were rated as:

“very important”

Statement 1: Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed

Statement 4: Guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to

“important”

Statement 2: Students have a choice of programme

Statement 3: The physical environment is unlike school

Statement 5: Resources are well distributed and equitable

STUDENTS

The following indicators were rated as:

“very important”

Statement 6: Students' maintain attendance and commitment to the programme

Statement 7: Students' achievements and success are valued

Statement 8: Recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group

“important”

Statement 9: There is evidence that offending is reduced

CURRICULUM

The following indicators were rated as:

“very important”

Statement 10: A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn

Statement 12: Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals

Statement 13: A range of supporting subjects

Statement 15: There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce

Statement 16: That group teaching methods are used

Statement 17: There are very small groupings of students and one to one interaction to provide individual attention

Statement 18: That activities proceed at a slower pace

Statement 20: There are routines, boundaries and consistency

Statement 22: That safety management procedures are followed

“important”

Statement 11: Literacy and numeracy are crucial aspects

Statement 14: There are challenging activities which build success and confidence

Statement 19: Activities are varied and changing constantly

PROVIDERS

The following indicators were rated as:

“very important”

Statement 23: Programmes have strong links to support structures

Statement 24: There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively

Statement 25: Staff can relate well to students

Statement 27: Teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream

Statement 29: All staff have effective self-management skills

“important”

Statement 28: As well as trained teachers there are tutors / alternative educators

Statement 30: Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes

Statement 31: There is a male / female gender mix of staff providing appropriate role models

Statement 32: Government policy and support evident

FAMILIES

The following indicators were rated as:

“very important”

Statement 35: There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student

“important”

Statement 33: A relationship is developed with students' families

Statement 34: The family includes identifying a key member in order to communicate effectively with the family

Statement 36: Families are participants in the programme

3.5.5 Reviewing the initial indicator list

Following the telephone survey and analysis of the findings the original list that was presented to participants is described below with “very important” indices listed before those of lesser importance. Indicator statements are presented in full. See Appendix M for a more user friendly listing which provides an alternative for distribution within alternative education settings.

1. CATEGORY ONE: PLACE WHERE THE PROGRAMME OPERATES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

It is “very important” that:

- **Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed.**
- **The guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to with communication, and regular networking routinely occurring.**

It is “important” that:

- **Students have a choice of programme** because of the different "flavour" approach by different providers, YMCA, marae etc. to suit individual students' needs.
- **The physical environment is unlike school**, being informal with couches, tables, stereo, etc. It is "like home," and may be home for some.
- **Resources are well distributed, and equitable, and funding is accountable.**

2. CATEGORY TWO: STUDENTS WHO ATTEND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

It is “very important” that:

- **Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme** such that the student wants to attend and bring their “mates”.
Students' achievement and success are valued by evidence of student ownership, self-image and negotiated ground rules.

It is “important” that

- **There is recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group** as a complex developmental life-stage for students, particularly with regard to social relationships.
- **There is evidence that offending is reduced.**

3. CATEGORY THREE: CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

It is “very important” that

- **A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn** such as, daily transportation, provision of food, emotional needs.
- **Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals**, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended, with strategising to prevent belittling from peers to whom "being dumb" may be "being cool".
- **There is a range of supporting subjects** which also integrate literacy and numeracy, such as: life-skills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym and sports.
- **Group teaching methods are used** rather than formal "chalk and talk" teaching, allowing for social learning activities, communication, problem solving, discussion, busy chatter, with reduced social barriers, such as status of staff.
- **There are very small groupings of students, and one to one interaction to provide individual attention.**
- **Activities proceed at a slower pace**, with timetables that are flexible to allow time to deal with problems, talk, and discuss informally.
- **Activities are varied, and changing constantly** both outdoor and indoor, using management, school, community and, regional facilities in order that students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
- **There are routines, boundaries, and consistency**, with regard to the structure of the day.
- **Cultural issues are addressed**, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
- **Safety management procedures are followed** with regard to programmes and equipment (scissors, cooking tools, kayaking, school responsibility.)

It is “important” that

- **Literacy and numeracy are crucial aspects** and specialists are employed to teach them
- **There are challenging activities which build success and confidence**, and help students take ownership, particularly geographic regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/ activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools, and self esteem.
- **There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce**, using prior knowledge of student achievement levels, tutor support and peer mentors as well as eventually a gradual

lessening of support prior to leaving for work or vocational training, also when students leave at night.

4. CATEGORY FOUR: PROVIDERS, A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF INDIVIDUALS: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, CO-ORDINATORS, TEACHERS, TUTORS, HEALTH, WELFARE, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION PROFESSIONALS IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

It is “very important” that:

- **Such programmes have strong links to support structures**, which include the principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid), such that a network of colleagues, are in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- **There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively**, organising aspects of the programme working at different levels, a significant person who is both mentor and role model, with an empathetic consistent relationship with students as well as trained educational advisers.
- **Staff can relate well to students** and are their helpers, mentors, supporters, and advocates.
- **These teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream**, because their teaching role is qualitatively different. This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counseling, and behaviour management, often requirements on a daily basis.
- **All staff have effective self management skills**, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.

It is “important” that:

Training is viewed as crucial for teachers, to provide pedagogical and curriculum expertise, as well as professional supervision, so that there is a body of staff who are trained teachers.

- **As well as trained teachers there are tutors/alternative educators** who have a range of attributes to enhance life skills. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with “wayward” youth. In quality programmes they will be in-service trained for their

particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.

- **Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes** need to be supported by the staff person with whom the students have a close relationship and who has experience in behaviour management, such that there is effective teaching in specialist subject areas.
- **The male female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role models**, and solutions for student needs re abuse, rape, sexual orientation.
- **Government policy and support are evident** by provision of adequate communication, and resources, as well as recognition of teacher qualification and function by parity in secondary salaries

CATEGORY FIVE: FAMILIES PROVIDE A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT AND SET OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT CANNOT BE DUPLICATED BY A PROGRAMME IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

It is “very important” that:

- **Student work is seen to be valued** both by educators, peers and families, by newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.
- **There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student**, such that an understanding of the programme will enlist parent participation at home to reinforce programme routines goals and boundaries, and student progress and achievements are recognised.

It is “important” that:

- **A relationship is developed with students’ families**, no matter what the structure, or circumstances of the situation. It is acknowledged that sometimes family circumstances are contributory to student difficulties), by programme educators.
- **Support for the family includes identifying a key member, in order to communicate effectively with the family**, home visits, and involving family members on their own terms in their areas of expertise, gardening, hearing students read, gym work, putting down a hangi.
- **Families are participants in the programme** learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.

3.5.7 Summary of the findings

The outcomes of the focus groups have been a set of quality indicators for the development of alternative education programmes. The administration of a five point Likert Scale rating has lead to discrimination between those indicators seen as very important and important. Overall all indicators across the areas of programme, students, curriculum, providers and family were seen on the positive side of neutral. If a student

database is to be developed the set of above indicators could be used as a guide to its development. See Appendix O for a guideline to such development.

Section Four: Revisiting the themes of the investigation

4.1 Introduction

A major purpose of the investigation was to develop a set of quality indicators that could be used to guide the development and implementation of alternative education programmes. The major sources of data were identifying what were quality indicators within the national and international literature: using a focus group format to interview key informants, the findings of which were verified by a telephone survey. Within this section the overall themes that arose from the focus group data will be revisited and expanded upon making links with the literature. The focus group transcriptions were analysed for the specific purpose of collapsing the coded information into a set of indicators for verification with a further group of key informants of alternative education programmes. However at the same time the coded themes provide a rich fabric of ideas and examples relevant to alternative education programmes, some of which are now incorporated within this final section.

4.2 The place where the programme operates

Within the study there was an overwhelming sense of the uniqueness of alternative education programmes that reflected the communities in which they operated (Bronfrenner, 1979; Powell, 1997). It was stressed that although there should be accountability to government and local management this should not lead to standardisation of programmes. Before students could engage with learning they needed to feel comfortable, welcomed and emotionally safe giving them choice and ownership over how they wished to participate within the programme. Standardisation of programmes would run counter to meeting individual student needs. It was evident that a strength of programmes was their informality, they were less like school and more like home. It was emphasised that this environment although flexible and informal needed to have clear guidelines and organisational structures (Glasser, 1992; Gottfredson, 1997; Goodchild and Williams, 1994).

The study has therefore raised what are the best structures to ensure such an environment. Is it within the present educational structures, such as units within mainstream settings, or does the advice given by Gregg (1998) need to be heeded. Such advice would mean that “add ons” to the basic mainstream structures would be seen as perpetuating the practice of expecting students to adapt to the needs of the system rather than the system adapting to the needs of the students. The ease with which such adaptation could be achieved however is interrelated to the fact that alternative education teachers are socialised and trained within the dominant culture of the mainstream education (Gerritsen, 1999; Skirtic, 1995).

A common perception arising from the study was that the provision of a nurturing and flexible environment had resulted in increased student attendance. Despite the fact that there were only three focus groups there was a sense that attendance varied regionally. This difference was associated with the fact that within large cities there are more distractions for students which could then deflect them from attending the activities of the alternative education programme. Whereas in smaller communities students were attracted to the programmes to such a degree that they brought their 'mates' to take part in the activities.

Where students' attendance is not consistent the challenge for providers is to constantly review strategies to achieve an enhanced environment in an attempt to motivate students to attend. Some of the ways reported within the study which are endorsed by Gottfredson (1997) were to make the environment more welcoming through informal settings furnished with lounge suites and stereo and television sets; and to give students ownership of the room through displaying posters, pictures and collage. Further in the majority of programmes reported on there was an emphasis on authentic learning taking place within local settings such as the gym, on the local marae and in shopping malls. This emphasis on "in context" learning which integrated basic subject context into life experiences, rather than text book learning, verifies the work of Glasser (1992); Friedrich (1997). "In context" learning requires that there is a strong partnership built with local communities. Such partnership implies that consortium and alternative education provider members have skills of facilitation required to break down any community barriers encountered (Clark et al, 1996).

4.3 Curriculum

For learning to occur there was a major focus on curriculum that recognised the need for delivery within an authentic context, another term for "in context" learning. Such curriculum supported the learning style of alternative education students who frequently had cognitive problems with abstract ideas that interfered with students setting realistic goals. Real situations in the community for learning were emphasised rather than those which are textbook and exam focussed (Reid, 1989).

Emphasis on the importance of literacy and numeracy as basic life skills was reinforced throughout the study with an emphasis on teaching these subjects within real life contexts, which is congruent with the work of Quinn et al. (1999). Whilst literacy and numeracy skills were being reinforced as an integral part of most activities, students were reported as frequently being unaware of how these areas were being taught, as they did not equate the authentic contexts with the text book failure they had experienced in the mainstream. As such they were less inhibited in their connection with these numeracy and literacy activities. Such informal activities associated with real life contexts covered: writing letters for real life communication purposes, for example, inviting families for a hangi, job applications, maths exercises, such as, measuring out distances for a baseball court.

Such authentic teaching calls upon a different pedagogy, making it important for teachers and alternative educators to have creative strategies for the development of an integrated curriculum that likewise includes equally appropriate forms of ongoing assessment (Broadfoot, 1992). As a result in any alternative education programme there needs to be frequent communication and shared planning between the teachers and educators to identify which features of literacy and numeracy need to be focussed upon, both within the programme base as well as within community based activities.

Within the study the key informants revealed that alternative programme educators valued the specialist expertise of teachers who came in routinely to deliver more intensive literacy and numeracy programmes. This is in accordance with Edwards (1988b) who advises the importance of curricula being delivered by experts. This also has implications for the inclusion of other forms of curricula such as science and technology within the alternative education programme. If a reduced curriculum is to be avoided for those students who wish to work in areas that alternative education programmes are not equipped or resourced to teach, then ways must be found to work in partnership with the consortium schools and/or locate the expertise within the local community.

Prior to any formalised learning, such as, what is required within the seven areas of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework there was strong support that a hierarchy of student needs must first be addressed (Ministry of Education, 1993). These may be social, behavioural, or academic stemming from the students' socio economic status and the barriers built up as a result of alienation through negative experiences in the mainstream. Students need to feel emotionally and physically in a state of wellbeing in order to connect with learning (Reilly et al., 1982). This does not imply that staff of alternative education programmes do not need to have expectations of student learning. Key informants stressed the utmost importance of staff extending students and alerted them to the trap of being pleased with small increments of progress without having the vision of leading the students through to the next stage.

Key informants referred to other curriculum subjects being taught which align alternative curricula with the seven areas of the New Zealand National Curriculum: Science, Mathematics, Technology, Arts, Health and Physical Education, Language and Languages and Social Sciences. It was not entirely clear what was expected of alternative education programmes with regard to implementing the New Zealand National Curriculum. Key informants indicated that programmes were attempting to work on the instruction of the Ministry of Education which was they would not expect the full curriculum to be taught in the seven areas, however a later ERO directive had contradicted this. Whatever the intention, it was felt that to have a heavy focus on this curriculum was ambitious and an impossible task. A range of diverse subjects that lie outside that of the National Framework is highly desirable according to Quinn et al., (1999) who have concerns about students otherwise being disadvantaged with a reduced curriculum. A longer term view rather than that of a full national curriculum is needed if these students are going to overcome what may have been six or more years of school failure. Overcoming the sense of failure is a legitimate goal for alternative education programmes. The results of a successful programme may not be realised until students

move onto further training or work. In the context of alternative education The National Curriculum needs to be supplemented by an alternative education foci such as social skills, nutrition and self-management. A particular boost to student confidence had been developed through success in sports and leisure subjects, such as, kayaking, caving, climbing, tramping, mountain biking. Geographic differences appeared to determine the type and extent of challenging activities.

Key informants indicated that what they referred to as “diagnostic formative assessment” was used as an integral part of learning so that student learning processes were supported with particular reference to the development of individual programme plans for students (Broadfoot, 1992). It was evident however that alternative educators were dependent upon the expertise of teachers to undertake such assessment. This raises the question as to what training is required for educators to become competent in understanding and practising assessment associated with initial planning which is of a formative nature.

Within the programmes reported upon by the key informants a different pedagogy had been formulated on an ad hoc basis to meet student needs. Some of the features were: small groups of students that reinforce individual identities, social group teaching methods which enhance peer support and promote a more level social status between student and educator (Glasser, 1992). The classroom is frequently a community venue, student groups are small, timetables are flexible such that student needs are paramount rather than the student being fitted to the system (Gregg, 1998) with work proceeding at a slower pace. In order to be effective within such a pedagogy both teachers and educators need to have upskilling in creative approaches to support different learning styles (Wilson et al.1987). Although the issue of a different pedagogy is the focus of debate within the literature with the concept that alternative education is a form of remedial work and rehabilitation, within the study there was key informant support for the approach taken by Gregg (1999) and Raywid (1990) that divergence from the traditional school structures and organisation are seen as the most appropriate approach. Aligned with this is that unless alternative education programmes have an effective transition procedure all that has been built up within the programme can be lost. Not only was there support for transition out of the programme but also into the programme. A team approach between the consortium schools and the alternative education programme as well as between the programme and work options is required if the students are to be sustained (Briggs & Hawkins, 1998; Quinn et al., 1999). Daily transport was also indicated by some key informants as a necessary requirement if students were to be assisted to attend on a regular basis.

4.4 Providers

The investigation revealed that there were two basic types of educators who work with students within alternative education programmes. The first were trained teachers and the second were members of the community who were referred to as tutors; trainers and educators. Gagné (1996) refers to this second level of educators as “street workers” who provide for the students’ survival needs, and support the teachers by being close confidantes of the students. Where the educators were not trained teachers their backgrounds were often associated with some aspect of youth work. There was a strong commitment on the part of the educators to assist youth to avoid at risk situations that in some cases they had experienced themselves. In effect they had “walked the talk”. Their particular role included daily engagement with individual students, taking care of their meals, transport and personal problems, family issues, as well as providing transitions between class and work, and times when they were not required to be in class. In some situations these educators were also involved in a teaching role advised and supported by those members of the team who were trained teachers.

In being asked to describe what were the attributes of a good teacher in a quality education programme personal attributes were seen as more important than teaching qualifications although a combination was the ultimate. Such attributes focused upon empathy; being non-judgmental; warm and nurturing (Edwards, 1988). Of interest there was consensus that in order to meet the demands of the student group educators needed to be youthful and energetic. The nurturing of a warm close relationship between student and teacher/educator was seen to be pivotal for success. Teamwork was recognised as a strategy for spreading the load, maintaining the energy levels, staff morale and engendering a shared vision. Similar to Glasser (1992) the viewpoint was expressed that teaching students within alternative education programmes required a supportive infrastructure.

Although strong emphasis was placed on the need for alternative educators to firstly be effective within the interpersonal area the importance of teacher training was not denied. Key informants did value the training teachers brought to the alternative education setting, particularly in specialist subject delivery (literacy and numeracy). However it was intimated that even when trained teachers worked in alternative education settings, they required additional skills and training beyond what might be expected in the mainstream, arising from the specific demands of at risk and alienated students (Gottfredson, 1997, Gregg, 1998). Such perceptions are in keeping with Gerritsen’s (1992) opinion that trained teachers are skilled in mainstream subject delivery and pedagogy but this is in itself not adequate to meet the demands of students enrolled in alternative education programmes. Some areas of extra-curricular training for mainstream teachers suggested by key informants as useful on a daily basis were: counselling, behaviour management, special needs planning, drug and substance abuse knowledge, group management and conflict resolution skills (Gregg, 1998).

As well as students being facilitated by appropriately trained staff with enhanced personal attributes, the importance of ensuring an appropriate male female gender mix for individual student groups was raised. At the same time male role models were important as students frequently had no father figure in the home, and commonly associated the male gender with violent and abusive behaviour. In terms of further promoting optimum student staff interactions ethnic compatibility was reported but was seen to be less important than a well founded warm working relationship between students and their educators (Clark et al, 1996).

Nevertheless as probably 80 to 90 percent of the students within alternative education settings were Maori, key informants emphasised that culturally appropriate staffing as well as culturally appropriate activities and physical environment needed to be seen as important (Clark et al., 1996). There was value in Maori students having a close affiliation with the local Marae where they would learn their role on the marae that they could carry with them.

Although the focus was on educational staff working closely with students, staff being able to access multidisciplinary support was crucial to the success of the alternative education programme. Key informants expressed the importance of their regular meetings to share ideas and gain support as well as routine visiting of health and social workers to the alternative education venue. Glasser (1992), notes that an effective programme cannot operate well outside a supportive multidisciplinary team. At the same time its major worth is that the networks are naturally occurring, and therefore more effective than being an imposed intervention (McMillen, 1998.)

In overviewing how the ideal alternative education programme could operate the outcomes of this investigation direct attention to the importance of appropriate staff training as it was believed that the necessary extra curricular skills required are not necessarily embedded within the regular training (DES, 1989). This raises the potential for training institutions such as Polytechnics; Colleges of Education; and Private Training Providers to offer a range of qualifications in the area of alternative education. Such options could cover specialised Certificates and Diplomas as well as incorporating the pedagogy of alternative education into preservice teacher training. A dilemma that alternative education raises is whether it should be seen as separated out from mainstream education and mainstream teacher training. It could be said that presenting alternative education as a parallel but different system of education is segregation. There was a sense however if these students were maintained within the mainstream they would be set apart from their peers anyway. At the same time if there was a more inclusive pedagogy operating within the mainstream, a view expounded by Gregg (1998), it was hoped that fewer students would experience alienation. Gregg expounds the need for a more flexible, deregulated and empowering mainstream environment. NZCER, (1999) reports this view has already received some favour, and note that remedial work within the mainstream has improved student outcomes making it easier for some to remain who otherwise may have become drop out statistics. If some of these issues were addressed there may be only limited need to segregate students into alternative settings anyway.

4.5 Students

A main aim of key informants for students was that they be committed to the alternative education programme, demonstrated through consistent attendance. For this to happen it was agreed that the programme needed to provide a welcoming, safe, stimulating environment. The importance of students having a choice of programme site was reinforced as well as staff engaging positively with the student within the first week. It was said in keeping with the sentiment of Gottfredson, (1997) that if staff “don’t get them within the first week” they have lost them.

Similarly to the work of Hetherington and Parke (1990) the complexities of adolescent development and peer interaction was recognised within the study. It was considered to underpin all aspects of programme delivery. One programme reported a hierarchical system where students who had been longer in the programme supported new students. By engaging in peer support these students earned privileges such as playing pool, snooker, food. This in turn increased self-efficacy and leadership skills. Kanner, et al. (1981) confirm that a token system of rewards is highly appropriate for adolescent audiences.

Students were reportedly more comfortable within the familiar networks set up by the alternative education programme, such that, they were not afraid of going to a health professional. This practice is borne out by Chen and Marks (1998), who indicate that youth frequently retreat from services in the community, because of misconceptions of delivery.

Another group with a youth justice approach reported a reduced incidence of offending for students. By participating in the programme it was believed that their attitude to law enforcement officers had changed. Programme activities included positive interface with police and other justice personnel, and seemed particularly related to the smaller community that it operated within. This is borne out by Brody et al., 2001, who discuss neighbourhood socialisation in smaller towns (Larner, 1997).

4.6 Families

Within the key informant group there was a mixed response with regard to the practice of family involvement improving the chances and relating the history of students. Although, there was a consensus that involving families should have high priority because the students were inextricably linked to their family networks, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) families were also seen as being resourceful in giving a history of the programme; routinely supporting the students to attend the programme as well as reinforcing its worth to their family members. Where families were committed to the programme key informants perceived that there was an increased likelihood that the family developed an increased belief in their son’s or daughter’s potential to achieve (Galinsky, 1992).

Reservations nevertheless were expressed that it could be difficult to work with families because of the negativity that some had experienced associated with their son/daughter in

the mainstream. It was also considered that the family could frequently be implicated in the students' problems (Ainsworth & Hansen, 1996). However there was a sense that this was sometimes because staff were not trained to facilitate adults and for positive outcomes staff required expertise within the area of facilitation (Galinsky, 1987; Shartrand et al. 1994). Multidisciplinary support was valuable here but did not exclude the need for teachers and educators who were the closest to the students to becoming involved in resolution of family issues through problem solving, mediation and counselling strategies. Therefore in any recognised qualification or professional development programme there needs to be an ongoing emphasis on facilitation and those areas that support teachers/educators to become becoming skilled in group dynamics (Dunmoyer & Kos, 1993).

Where success in family involvement was reported there was that there was a most noticeable outcome in terms of student progress. Anecdotes were shared where the milieu of alternative education had also lead to reuniting factions in families.

Linking with families was only one aspect of family involvement within alternative education programmes. A second type of involvement was where family members took part in the programme routinely hearing reading, lifting weights and doing gym work alongside their family member, as well as taking part in parent education courses. In some situations a key family member was identified by staff as a conduit to improved relationships between the staff and the family. (Clark et al., 1996).

In keeping with the literature (Konzal, 2000) is that that no matter how difficult it may be for staff to connect with families they need to be given the skills and support to build partnerships with them. Once again this suggestion has implications for professional development in the skills of family facilitation. It also has implications for staff understanding the significance of assisting the students to strengthen relationships with family.

4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion the key informants have informed the debate on the status of alternative education within the spectrum of educational provision offered by the Ministry of Education. As a group the key informants were well informed, had lived the experience of alternative education and were strong in their belief that as stated in the opening paragraph of this discussion, alternative education programmes had a uniqueness about them and that they needed to operate in keeping with the specific needs of students and local communities. The overriding need for staff that was pinpointed was that of professional development and training qualifications. Keeping in mind the call for flexibility in the development of alternative education programmes the same ethos would need to pervade how staff working within these programmes can upgrade their skills in a way that recognises their strengths and previous learning history. Staff are very creative in their approach to curriculum development. It therefore behoves the policy makers to be similarly creative in upskilling those staff, many of who will have little in the way of

formal qualifications, but whose commitment is the essence of ensuring that the students who attend alternative education programmes have a second chance.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Information Sheet for Managing Schools

<p>INFORMATION SHEET. FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND/OR CO-ORDINATORS OF MANAGING SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN DELIVERY OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.</p>

The Ministry of Education is seeking to gain an improved understanding of the **indicators of quality alternative education programmes** being provided within communities throughout New Zealand. As the Principal and/or Co-ordinator of a Managing school, involved in an alternative education programme initiative, you have been invited to participate in a research project, being conducted for the Ministry of Education by the Auckland College of Education.

The following sets out to explain the stages of the project:

FOCUS GROUPS will be held in three centres throughout New Zealand. They will consist of a forum of representatives, drawn from the managing school, associated consortium schools, and providers of alternative education programmes. There will be up to 16 representatives and 2 researchers involved in the focus group meetings.

Discussion in the focus groups will centre around **the shared experience of alternative education provision**. These sessions will be audio-taped to facilitate data collection, and participants will be requested to sign a consent form which will ensure confidentiality

TELEPHONE SURVEY: It is intended to ensure that a wide audience is consulted with in regard to experiences in alternative educational programmes. Therefore, a copy of quality indicators (as formulated through the focus groups) will be sent to six managing schools, selected as representative of metropolitan, provincial, and small centres throughout New Zealand. These schools will not have been involved in the focus groups. A telephone survey will be based on the indices, developed at the focus meetings and participants will be asked for Likert responses to a series of questions that probe the level of appropriateness of the success of indicators. Some open-ended questions will also be included.

The collated data including collective responses will be entirely confidential, and will not mention any names of schools or participants. Participants are free to withdraw their responses from the study up until the time of analysis of the data. Data will be stored for a period of up to three years within the Auckland College of Education. After being analysed findings will be presented in a report to the Ministry of Education.

As Principal and/or Co-ordinator of a managing school you will have received general information on this project from the Ministry of Education. After reading this information sheet, we ask that if you are happy with the arrangements, you:

- 1 Return the organisational consent form to us in the stamped addressed envelope provided, which gives permission for your organisation to be involved, and allows the project to commence.**
- 2 Select a representative from your school associated with the alternative education programme initiative who will be invited to attend one of the focus groups indicated.**
- 3 Nominate 5 Consortium Schools (which you manage, and which you perceive to be co-ordinating quality programmes).**

We will phone you to ascertain whether you have chosen to participate, and if so, which schools you have selected, and we will then contact (by mail) each of the 5 Consortium schools you have nominated. They will also be invited to send a representative to a focus group, (time and place to be confirmed).

At the completion of the project after all data has been collated and analysed you will receive a copy of the executive summary of the project.

Approved by the Auckland College of Education Research Ethics Committee on 12 July for a period of 5 months.

If you have any concerns about the ethics of the project please ring Helen Dixon of the Research Ethics Committee of the Auckland College of Education, ph. 623 8899. If you wish to have any further information on the project, please ring the Co-ordinator of the Project, Avril Thesing, in the Project Office on 623 8899 Xtn 8396.

Appendix B: Information Sheet for Representatives

INFORMATION SHEET. FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMME PROVIDERS INVOLVED IN DELIVERY OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.

The Ministry of Education is seeking to gain an improved understanding of the **indicators of quality alternative education programmes** being provided within communities throughout New Zealand. As the Representative of a School/Programme Provider involved in an alternative education programme initiative, you have been invited to participate in a research project, being conducted for the Ministry of Education by the Auckland College of Education.

The following sets out to explain the stages of the project:

FOCUS GROUPS will be held in three centres throughout New Zealand. They will consist of a forum of representatives, drawn from the managing school selected, as well as five of their associated consortium schools. There will be up to 16 representatives and 2 researchers involved in the focus group meetings.

Discussion in the focus groups will centre around **the shared experience of alternative education provision**. These sessions will be audio-taped to facilitate data collection, and participants will be requested to sign a consent form which will ensure confidentiality

TELEPHONE SURVEY: It is intended to ensure that a wide audience is consulted with in regard to experiences in alternative educational programmes. Therefore, a copy of quality indicators (as formulated through the focus groups) will be sent to six managing schools, selected as representative of metropolitan, provincial, and small centres throughout New Zealand. These schools will not have been involved in the focus groups. A telephone survey will be based on the indices, developed from the focus meetings and participants will be asked for Likert responses to a series of questions that indicate the level of appropriateness of the success of indicators and will also be accompanied by selected open ended questions.

The collated data including collective responses will be entirely confidential, and will not mention any names of schools or participants. Participants are free to withdraw their responses from the study up until the time of analysis of the data. Data will be stored for a period of up to three years within the Auckland College of Education. After being analysed findings will be presented in a report to the Ministry of Education.

As the Representative of a School/Programme Provider involved in the delivery of alternative education programmes we invite you to attend a focus meeting, and discuss your experiences. (time and place to be confirmed).

Following the completion of the project when the data has been collated and analysed you will receive a copy of the executive summary of the project.

Approved by the Auckland College of Education Research Ethics Committee on 12 July for a period of 5 months.

If you have any concerns about the ethics of the project please ring Helen Dixon of the Research Ethics Committee of the Auckland College of Education, ph. 623 8899

If you wish to have any further information on the project, please ring the Co-ordinator of the Project Avril Thesing, in the Project Office on 623 8899 Xn 8396.

Appendix C: Focus Group Interview Schedule

(The following questions were put to the focus group)

3. THE PROGRAMME

WHAT ARE THE GOOD THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN IN A PROGRAMME THAT CREATE A QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

(The facilitator will use the bracketed prompts to probe the following areas)

- ENVIRONMENT/CULTURAL/SAFETY:
(Health/physical/emotional of student/physical environment of programme)
- CURRICULUM:
(Goalsetting/academic/curriculum/assessment/activities/remedial/diversity/flexibility/structure)
- SPORTS/LEISURE:
(Activities)
- TRANSITIONS:
(Orientation, support school/home to programmes – eventual programme to work/unemployment)

4. THE PROVIDERS

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEACHER IN A QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME?

(The facilitator used the bracketed prompts to probe the following areas)

- PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES: (Personality/attitudes/experience)
- TRAINING: (Pre-service/in-service/professional development)
- SUPPORT STRUCTURES: (Communication/ collaboration with consortium members/supervision/safety behaviour management/time release/programme structure/resources/supportpersonnel/finance/options/ethnicity,cultural match)
- NETWORKS: (General knowledge/links with community/cultural)

3. THE FAMILIES/WHANAU

WHAT PART CAN A FAMILY/WHANAU PLAY IN A QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME?

(The facilitator used the bracketed prompts to probe the following areas)

- **COMMUNICATION/BELONGING/COLLABORATION/EQUITY:** (Engagement/sustained contact/skills)
- **SUPPORT STRUCTURES:** (An understanding of the programme/ issues, promoting reinforcement of goals/goals inclusion/involvement/contribution /ongoing communication/feedback)
- **CULTURAL:** (Wider sense as well as ethnic protocols/links marae/kaumatua)

4. THE STUDENTS

HOW BEST CAN A STUDENT BE SUPPORTED IN A QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME?

(The facilitator will use the bracketed prompts to probe the following areas)

- **COMMUNICATION:** (Relationships with teacher/adults/family/whanau)
- **CULTURAL:** (Match/support)
- **PEER SUPPORT STRUCTURES** (Relationships/past/present/siblings/youth culture/feedback)
- **PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT:** (Health, physical, mental, sexual, social work/counselling)
- **INDIVIDUAL:** (Progress, goals, attitudes, ratio of support)
- **ENVIRONMENT:** (Structure of programme/behaviour management /conflict resolution)

GENERAL COMMENT:

ARE THERE ANY ISSUES WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AND NEED TO BE INCLUDED?

Appendix D: Individual Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT IN FOCUS GROUP.

TITLE OF PROJECT: Quality alternative education provision.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Patricia O'Brien, Dean, Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Research Co-ordinator:

Ms. Avril Thesing, Lecturer, Centre for Special Education.

Researcher: Mr. Paul Herbert, Researcher, TEAM Solutions.

VENUE

DATE:

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

I have heard and understood an explanation of the research project I have been invited to take part in.

I have been given, and I have read, a written explanation of what is asked of me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. I understand that I may withdraw from the project, at any time until the data is written up.

I realise that the ideas and opinions expressed by me and other participants are within the open context of a focus group, and all disclosures should be treated with respect, to protect identities.

I am assured any information that I give will be treated with respect, and confidentiality with regard to what appears in the written report.

I approve the use of material being recorded on audio-tape for this project.

I consent to take part as a participant in this research.

Signed: _____ Participant.

Signed: _____ Researcher obtaining consent.

Appendix E: Organisational Consent Forms

FORM FOR ORGANISATIONAL CONSENT: MANAGING AND CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS.

TITLE OF PROJECT: QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Patricia O'Brien, Dean, Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Research Co-ordinator:

Ms. Avril Thesing, Lecturer, Centre for Special Education.

Researcher: Mr. Paul Herbert, Researcher, TEAM Solutions.

VENUE: _____

DATE: _____

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

I have heard and understood an explanation of the research project my organisation has been invited to take part in.

I have been given, and I have read, a written explanation of what is asked of the organisation, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

I understand that the organisation may withdraw from the project, at any time until the data is written up.

I am assured any information that is given will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

I approve the use of material being recorded on audio-tape for this project.

I consent to this organisation taking part in this research.

Signed: _____ Principal/Co-ordinator.

Signed: _____ Researcher obtaining consent.

Appendix F: Verification Summary

QUALITY INDICATORS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

A project conducted by the Auckland College of Education.

As a result of the Focus Groups (Phase 1) conducted in three different areas of New Zealand (Auckland , Gisborne, Invercargill) the following indicators of quality provision were determined (subject to verification by the individual Focus Groups). The material has been condensed for the purpose of developing a list of indicators, to present to a wider audience of alternative education providers, to gauge their views also. This constitutes Phase 2 of the project. Participants will be invited (through the medium of a telephone survey),to assess the relative importance of the indicators listed with regard to providing quality alternative education.

After the data from the telephone survey has been analysed, it will be written up, along with a more comprehensive discussion of the Focus Groups, (than a summary allows) in a final report for the Ministry of Education.

As you were a participant in one of the original Focus Groups you have been sent a copy of the list of indicators to be used in the telephone survey, **THIS IS TO ALLOW YOU TO VERIFY THAT THE INFORMATION WE HAVE USED FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS IS CORRECT, IF YOU ARE HAPPY WITH THIS YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO ANYTHING ELSE. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE, it is for your interest, to see what will be used in the telephone survey .**

We appreciate very much your involvement with the project Focus Groups. Two participants from your group will receive a telephone call from a member of our Team to check that the information to be used in the telephone survey is correct. When the project is completed your consortium will receive one copy of the report, as well as executive summaries for individual participants, as indicated.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.

A project being conducted for the Ministry of Education by the Auckland College of Education.

In Phase 2 of this project we are conducting a telephone survey of AE Providers throughout the country. The survey tool is a series of statements that identify a range of quality indicators for alternative education. These were generated as a result of holding Focus Groups in Auckland, Gisborne and Invercargill, which was Phase 1 of the project. It is our intent by this survey to gain the opinions of a wider audience.

The following are the indicators:

PLACE where the programme operates:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed.**
- **Students have a choice of programme** because of the different "flavour", approach by different Providers, YMCA, marae etc.to suit individual students'needs.
- **The physical environment is unlike school**, being informal with couches, tables, stereo etc. It is "like home," "not old and disreputable," and may be home for some.
- **The guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to** with communication, and regular networking routinely occurring
- **Resources are well distributed, and equitable**, and funding is accountable

STUDENTS who attend alternative programmes:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme** such that the student wants to attend and bring their mates.
- **Students' achievement and success are valued** by evidence of student ownership, self-image and negotiated ground rules.
- **There is recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group** as a complex developmental life-stage for students, particularly with regard to social relationships.
- **There is evidence that offending is reduced** (police anecdotal report.)

CURRICULUM activities:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn**, daily transportation, provision of food basics, emotional needs cared for.
- **Literacy and numeracy, are crucial aspects**, and specialists are employed to teach them.
- **Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals**, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended, (with strategising to prevent belittling from peers to whom "being dumb" may be "being cool").
- **There is a range of supporting subjects** which also integrate literacy and numeracy, such as: lifeskills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym, and sports.
- **There are challenging activities which build success and confidence**, and help students take ownership, particularly regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/ activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools for team work, and self esteem.
- **There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce**, into the programme using prior knowledge of student achievement levels, tutor support and peer mentors as well as eventually a gradual lessening of support prior to leaving for work or vocational training, (also when students leave at night.)
- **Group teaching methods are used** rather than formal "chalk and talk" teaching, allowing for social learning activities, communication, problem solving, discussion, busy chatter, with reduced social barriers, such as status of staff.
- **There are very small groupings of students, and one-to-one interaction to provide individual attention.**
- **Activities proceed at a slower pace**, with timetables that are flexible to allow time to deal with problems, talk, and discuss informally.
- **Activities are varied, and changing constantly** both outdoor and indoor, using management school, community and, regional facilities in order that students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
- **There are routines, boundaries, and consistency**, with regard to the structure of the day.
- **Cultural issues are addressed**, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
- **Safety management procedures are followed** with regard to programmes (scissors, cooking tools, kayaking, school responsibility.)

PROVIDERS, a multidisciplinary Team of individuals: school principals, co-ordinators, teachers, tutors, health, welfare, social control and community organisation professionals

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Such programmes have strong links to support structures**, which include the principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid), such that a network of colleagues, are in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- **There is a Team of educators who can work collaborately**, organising aspects of the programme working at different levels, a significant person who is both mentor and role model, with an empathetic consistent relationship with students as well as trained educational advisers.
- **Staff can relate well to students** and are their helpers, mentors, supporters, and advocates.
- **Training is viewed as crucial for teachers**, to provide pedagogical and curriculum expertise, as well as professional supervision, so that there is a body of staff who are trained teachers.
- **These teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream**, because their teaching role is qualitatively different (This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counselling, and behaviour management, often requirements on a daily basis.)
- **As well as trained teachers there are tutors/alternative educators** who have a range of attributes to enhance life skills. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. (These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with wayward youth. In quality programmes they will be in-service trained for their particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.
- **All staff have effective self management skills**, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.
- **Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes** need to be supported by the staff person with whom the students have a close relationship and experience in behaviour management, such that there is effective teaching in specialist subject areas.
- **The male female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role models**, and solutions for student needs re abuse, rape, sexual orientation.

- **Government policy and support are evident** by provision of adequate communication, and resources, as well as recognition of teacher qualification and function by parity in secondary salaries.

FAMILIES provide a unique environment and set of relationships that cannot be duplicated by a programme

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **A relationship is developed with students' families**, no matter what the structure, or circumstances of the situation (it is acknowledged that sometimes family circumstances are contributory to student difficulties).by programme educators.
- **Support for the family includes identifying a key member, in order to communicate effectively with the family**, home visits, and involving family members on their own terms in their areas of expertise, (gardening, hearing students read, gym work, putting down a hangi).
- **There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student**, such that an understanding of the programme will enlist parent participation at home to reinforce programme routines goals and boundaries, and student progress and achievements are recognised.
- **Families are participants in the programme** learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.
- **Student work is seen to be valued** both by educators, peers and families by, newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.

Are there any other features of quality alternative education programmes which may not have been covered by the survey which you would like to mention?

Appendix G: Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET.

FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND/OR CO-ORDINATORS OF MANAGING SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN DELIVERY OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.

The Ministry of Education is seeking to gain an improved understanding of the **indicators of quality alternative education programmes** being provided within communities throughout New Zealand. As the principal and/or co-ordinator of a managing school, involved in an alternative education programme initiative, you have been invited to participate in a research project, being conducted for the Ministry of Education by the Auckland College of Education. The following sets out to explain the stages of the project:

FOCUS GROUPS have been held in three centres throughout New Zealand. They consisted of a forum of representatives, drawn from the managing school, as well as five of their associated consortium schools. There were up to 16 representatives and 2 researchers involved in the focus group meetings. Discussion in the focus groups centred around **the shared experience of alternative education provision**. These sessions were taped to facilitate data collection, and participants were requested to sign a consent form which ensured confidentiality.

TELEPHONE SURVEY: It is intended to ensure that a wide audience is consulted with in regard to experiences in alternative educational programmes. Therefore, a copy of quality indicators (as formulated through the focus groups) will be sent to six managing schools, selected as representative of metropolitan, provincial, and small centres throughout New Zealand. These schools will not have been involved in the focus groups. A telephone survey will be based on the indices, developed at the focus meetings and participants will be asked for Likert responses to a series of questions which indicate the level of appropriateness of the success of indicators and will also be accompanied by selected open ended questions.

The collated data including collective responses will be entirely confidential, and will not mention any names of schools or participants. Participants are free to withdraw their responses from the study up until the time of analysis of the data. Data will be stored for a period of up to three years within the Auckland College of Education. After being analysed findings will be presented in a report to the Ministry of Education.

As Principal and/or Co-ordinator of a managing school you will have received general information on this project from the Ministry of Education.

Your managing school has been selected to take part in Phase 2 (Telephone Survey) of the project. You will also have received a copy of the indicators of quality programmes, which have been informed by the research literature as well as the focus groups already held.

If you agree to participate, arrangements will be made for a researcher to phone you at your convenience to discuss the indicators. There will also be some open-ended questions. This is likely to take 30 minutes in total. After reading this information sheet, we request that if you are happy with the arrangements, you:

- 1 Return both the individual and the organisational consent form to us in the stamped addressed envelope provided, which gives permission for both you as Manager, and your organisation to be involved, and allows Phase 2 of the Project to commence.
- 2 Nominate from your pool of alternative education providers, 3 who deliver quality education programmes. We will contact these people to invite them to be part of the research survey.
- 3 Retain the indicator sheet to support your responses at the time of the telephone survey.

We will phone you to ascertain whether or not you have agreed for you and/or your organisation to participate, and if so, we will arrange a suitable time for you to be part of the telephone survey. At the same time we will distribute a questionnaire to the 3 nominated Providers of programmes, who will then be invited to take part in the described telephone survey. After your, and their agreement, we will negotiate with them a suitable time for this to take place.

At the completion of the project you will receive a copy of the executive summary of the project.

Approved by the Auckland College of Education Research Ethics Committee on 12 July 2001 for a period of 5 months.

If you have any concerns about the ethics of the project please ring Helen Dixon of the Research Ethics Committee of the Auckland College of Education, ph. 623 8899

If you wish to have any further information on the project, please ring the Co-ordinator of the Project Avril Thesing, in the Project Office on 623 8899 Ext 8396.

Appendix H: Information Sheet for Representatives

<p>INFORMATION SHEET FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF PROGRAMME PROVIDERS INVOLVED IN DELIVERY OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.</p>
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The Ministry of Education is seeking to gain an improved understanding of the **indicators of quality alternative education programmes** being provided within communities throughout New Zealand. As the representative of a provider of a quality alternative education programme initiative, you have been invited to participate in a research project, being conducted for the Ministry of Education by The Auckland College of Education.

The following sets out to explain the stages of the project:

FOCUS GROUPS have been held in three centres throughout New Zealand. They consisted of a forum of representatives, drawn from the managing school selected in the above locations, as well as five of their associated consortium schools. There were up to 16 representatives and 2 researchers involved in the focus group meetings.

Discussion in the focus groups centred around **the shared experience of alternative education provision**. These sessions were audio-taped to facilitate data collection, and participants were requested to sign a consent form which ensured confidentiality.

TELEPHONE SURVEY: It is intended to ensure that a wide audience is consulted with in regard to experiences in alternative educational programmes. Therefore, a copy of quality indicators (as formulated through the focus groups) will be sent to six managing schools, selected as representative of metropolitan, provincial, and small centres throughout New Zealand. These schools will not have been involved in the focus groups. A telephone survey will be based on the indices, developed from the focus meetings and participants will be asked for Likert responses to a series of questions that indicate the level of appropriateness of the success of indicators and will also be accompanied by selected open ended questions.

The collated data including collective responses will be entirely confidential, and will not mention any names of schools or participants. Participants are free to withdraw their responses from the study up until the time of analysis of the data. Data will be stored for a period of up to three years within the Auckland College of Education. After being analysed findings will be presented in a report to the Ministry of Education.

You have been nominated by your Managing School as the Provider of a quality alternative education programme. As such, we would like to discuss your experiences with you, and invite you to take part in the Telephone Survey, which is Phase 2 of the described project. This will take approximately 30 minutes. (Date and time to be negotiated). Included is a list of the indicators of quality alternative

education programmes which are the result of data already collected in Phase 1 of the project.

We will phone you to ascertain whether or not you would like to be involved with the project. If so, then could you please return the consent form to us, in the stamped addressed envelope, and retain the list of indicators which will form the basis of the Telephone survey. We will then contact you to arrange a suitable time and date for the telephone interview.

At the completion of the project when all the data has been collated and analysed you will receive a copy of the executive summary of the project.

Approved by the Auckland College of Education Research Ethics Committee on 12 July 2001 for a period of 5 months.

If you have any concerns about the ethics of the project please ring Helen Dixon of the Research Ethics Committee of the Auckland College of Education, ph. 623 8899

If you wish to have any further information on the project, please ring the Co-ordinator of the Project Avril Thesing, in the Project Office on 623 8899 Ext 8396.

Appendix I: Consent Forms

FORM FOR ORGANISATIONAL CONSENT: MANAGING AND CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS.

TITLE OF PROJECT: Quality alternative education provision.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Patricia O'Brien, Dean, Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Research Co-ordinator:

Ms. Avril Thesing, Lecturer, Centre for Special Education.

Researcher: Mr. Paul Herbert, Researcher, TEAM Solutions.

DATE: _____

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

I have heard and understood an explanation of the research project my organisation has been invited to take part in.

I have been given, and I have read, a written explanation of what is asked of the organisation, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. I understand that the organisation may withdraw from the project, at any time until the data is written up.

I am assured any information that is given will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

I consent to this organisation taking part in this research.

Signed: _____ Principal/ Co-ordinator.

Signed: _____ Researcher obtaining consent.

Appendix J: Consent Forms

CONSENT FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT.

TITLE OF PROJECT: Quality alternative education provision.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Patricia O'Brien, Dean, Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Research Co-ordinator:

Ms. Avril Thesing, Lecturer, Centre for Special Education.

Researcher: Mr. Paul Herbert, Researcher, TEAM Solutions.

DATE:

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

I have heard and understood an explanation of the research project I have been invited to take part in.

I have been given, and I have read, a written explanation of what is asked of me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. I understand that I may withdraw from the project, at any time until the data is written up.

I am assured any information that I give will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

I consent to take part as a participant in this research.

Signed: _____ Participant.

Signed: _____ Researcher obtaining consent.

Appendix K: Telephone Survey

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.

A project being conducted for the Ministry of Education by the Auckland College Of Education.

In Phase 2 of this project we are conducting a telephone survey of AE Providers throughout the country. The survey tool is a series of statements that identify a range of quality indicators for alternative education. These were generated as a result of holding Focus Groups in Auckland, Gisborne and Invercargill, which was Phase 1 of the project.

It is our intent by this survey to gain the opinions of a wider audience.

Please read the statements and rate them according to how important you think they are for quality alternative education. WHEN WE PHONE YOU please respond according to how important or not important you believe the following to be, by giving the appropriate number on the scale:

- 1 = very important
- 2 = important
- 3 = neutral
- 4 = little importance
- 5 = not important
- 6 = Don't know

For example: How important is it that students are in smaller groups in alternative programmes?

Is it very important (1), important (2), neutral (3), of little importance (4), not important (5), or you don't know (6) that students are in smaller groups in quality alternative education programmes?

The following are the indicators:

PLACE where the programme operates:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed.**
- **Students have a choice of programme** because of the different "flavour", approach by different Providers, YMCA, marae etc.to suit individual students'needs.

- **The physical environment is unlike school**, being informal with couches, tables, stereo etc. It is "like home," "not old and disreputable," and may be home for some.
- **The guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to** with communication, and regular networking routinely occurring
- **Resources are well distributed, and equitable**, and funding is accountable

STUDENTS who attend alternative programmes:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme** such that the student wants to attend and bring their mates.
- **Students' achievement and success are valued** by evidence of student ownership, self-image and negotiated ground rules.
- **There is recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group** as a complex developmental life-stage for students, particularly with regard to social relationships.
- **There is evidence that offending is reduced** (police anecdotal report.)

CURRICULUM activities:

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn**, daily transportation, provision of food basics, emotional needs cared for.
- **Literacy and numeracy, are crucial aspects**, and specialists are employed to teach them.
- **Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals**, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended, (with strategising to prevent belittling from peers to whom "being dumb" may be "being cool").
- **There is a range of supporting subjects** which also integrate literacy and numeracy, such as: lifeskills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym, and sports.
- **There are challenging activities which build success and confidence**, and help students take ownership, particularly regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools for team work, and self esteem.
- **There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce**, into the programme using

- prior knowledge of student achievement levels, tutor support and peer mentors as well as eventually a gradual lessening of support prior to leaving for work or vocational training, (also when students leave at night.)
- **Group teaching methods are used** rather than formal "chalk and talk" teaching, allowing for social learning activities, communication, problem solving, discussion, busy chatter, with reduced social barriers, such as status of staff.
 - **There are very small groupings of students, and one to one interaction to provide individual attention.**
 - **Activities proceed at a slower pace**, with timetables that are flexible to allow time to deal with problems, talk, and discuss informally.
 - **Activities are varied, and changing constantly** both outdoor and indoor, using management school, community and , regional facilities in order that students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
 - **There are routines, boundaries, and consistency**, with regard to the structure of the day.
 - **Cultural issues are addressed**, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
 - **Safety management procedures are followed** with regard to programmes (scissors, cooking tools, kayaking, school responsibility.)

PROVIDERS, a multidisciplinary Team of individuals: school principals, co-ordinators, teachers, tutors, health, welfare, social control and community organisation professionals

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **Such programmes have strong links to support structures**, which include the principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid), such that a network of colleagues, are in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- **There is a Team of educators who can work collaborately**, organising aspects of the programme working at different levels, a significant person who is both mentor and role model, with an empathetic consistent relationship with students as well as trained educational advisers.
- **Staff can relate well to students** and are their helpers, mentors, supporters, and advocates.
- **Training is viewed as crucial for teachers**, to provide pedagogical and curriculum expertise, as well as professional supervision, so that there is a body of staff who are trained teachers.
- **These teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream**, because their teaching role is qualitatively different (This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counselling, and behaviour management, often requirements on a daily basis.)

- **As well as trained teachers there are tutors/alternative educators** who have a range of attributes to enhance life skills. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. (These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with wayward youth. In quality programmes they will be inservice trained for their particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.
- **All staff have effective self management skills**, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.
- **Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes** need to be supported by the staff person with whom the students have a close relationship and experience in behaviour management, such that there is effective teaching in specialist subject areas.
- **The male female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role models**, and solutions for student needs re abuse, rape, sexual orientation.
- **Government policy and support are evident** by provision of adequate communication, and resources, as well as recognition of teacher qualification and function by parity in secondary salaries.

FAMILIES provide a unique environment and set of relationships which cannot be duplicated by a programme

IN QUALITY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT?

- **A relationship is developed with students' families**, no matter what the structure, or circumstances of the situation (it is acknowledged that sometimes family circumstances are contributory to student difficulties).by programme educators.
- **Support for the family includes identifying a key member, in order to communicate effectively with the family**, home visits, and involving family members on their own terms in their areas of expertise, (gardening, hearing students read, gym work, putting down a hangi).
- **There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student**, such that an understanding of the programme will enlist parent participation at home to reinforce programme routines goals and boundaries, and student progress and achievements are recognised.
- **Families are participants in the programme** learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.

- **Student work is seen to be valued** both by educators, peers and families by , newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.

Are there any other features of quality alternative education programmes which may not have been covered by the survey which you would like to mention?

Appendix L : Analysis of the telephone survey responses

The individual responses to the alternative education indicators were entered onto an excel spread sheet and the means, standard deviations and frequencies were calculated for each of the 37 indicators using SPSS V10.0. See Appendix for a full description of the analysis and statistical outcomes including line graphs that supported the conclusion that the large majority of indicators were seen as either “very important” or “important”. Table 1 differentiates between these two levels across the five areas of indicators: programme, student, curriculum, providers and family.

Table 1.1

Means of alternative educator provider responses to indicators of quality alternative education programmes

Statements	n	Mean	SD
Place where programme operates			
1. Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed	20	1.25	.72
2. Students have a choice of programme	20	1.85	.99
3. Physical environment is unlike school	20	1.95	.83
4. Guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to	20	1.65	.75
5. Resources are well distributed and equitable	20	1.40	.60
Student statements			
6. Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme	20	1.15	.49
7. Students' achievements and success are valued	20	1.30	.47
8. Recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group	20	1.45	.51
9. Evidence that offending is reduced	20	2.25	1.21
Curriculum statements			
10. A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn	20	1.35	.67
11. Literacy and numeracy, are crucial aspects	20	1.75	.91
12. Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals	20	1.50	.69
13. There is a range of supporting subjects	20	1.50	.83
14. There are challenging activities which build success and confidence	20	1.85	1.04
15. There are good transitions between the mainstream and the			

programme as well as from the programme into the workforce	20	1.40	.60
16. Group teaching method are used	20	1.55	.76
17. There are very small groupings of students and one to one interaction to provide individual attention	20	1.40	.60
18. Activities proceed at a slower pace	20	1.45	.67
19. Activities are varied and changing constantly	20	1.95	1.28
20. There are routines, boundaries and consistency	20	1.20	.52
21. Cultural issues are addressed	20	1.85	.82
22. Safety management procedures are followed	20	1.25	.64
Provider statements			
23. Programmes have strong links to support structures	20	1.35	.49
24. There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively	20	1.40	.60
25. Staff can relate well to students	20	1.10	.45
26. Training is viewed as crucial for teachers	20	1.75	1.02
27. Teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream	20	1.40	.60
28. As well as trained teachers there are tutors/alternate educators	20	1.95	1.32
29. Staff effective self- management skills	20	1.15	.37
30. Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes	20	2.05	1.43
31. The male / female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role models	20	1.60	.68
32. Government policy and support are evident	20	1.90	1.33
Family statements			
33. A relationship is developed with students' families	20	1.55	.67
34. Support for the family includes identifying a key member, in order to communicate effectively with the family	20	1.65	.59
35. There is a recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student	20	1.35	.59
36. Families are participants in the programme	20	2.3	1.30
37. Student work is seen to be valued	20	1.35	.67

Note: A value of 1= “very important”, 2= “important”, 3= “neutral”, 4= “little importance”, 5= “not important”, 6= “don’t know”.

Line graphs were created for the distributions of both the means (see Figure 1.1) and standard deviations (see Figure 1.2). The graph of the means suggests that there are two overlapping distributions, one centred around a value of 1.40 the other around a value of 1.90. In the first cluster the values of the means range from 1.10 to 1.60, and in the second cluster they range from 1.65 to 2.30. This clustering is not the result of any statistical cluster analysis and thus has to be accepted with a degree of circumspection, however given the inappropriateness of an inferential analyses in a matrix in which there

are more variables than subjects there was little alternative to “eye balling” the distribution. Such a strategy is not without its critics, but has a long history in some sciences.

It is obvious that all statements are important to the respondents, and within the distributions is one set of statements regarded as typically “very important” (cluster one) and another regarded as “important” (cluster two). Statements from each category are now listed under the relevant clusters:

Cluster one statements

The following statements fall into the cluster one (mean values 1.10 to 1.60):

Place where programme operates:

Statement 1: Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed

Statement 4: Guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to

Student area:

Statement 6: Students’ maintain attendance and commitment to the programme.

Statement 7: Students’ achievements and success are valued.

Statement 8: Recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group.

Curriculum area:

Statement 10: A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn.

Statement 12: Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals.

Statement 13: A range of supporting subjects.

Statement 15: There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce.

Statement 16: That group teaching methods are used.

Statement 17: There are very small groupings of students and one to one interaction to provide individual attention.

Statement 18: That activities proceed at a slower pace.

Statement 20: There are routines, boundaries and consistency.

Statement 22: That safety management procedures are followed.

Provider area:

Statement 23: Programmes have strong links to support structures.

Statement 24: There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively.

Statement 25: Staff can relate well to students.

Statement 27: Teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream.

Statement 29: All staff have effective self-management skills.

Family area:

Statement 35: There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student.

Statement 37: Student work is seen to be valued.

Cluster two statements

The following statements fell into cluster two (mean values 1.65 to 2.30)

Place where programme operates:

Statement 2: Students have a choice of programme.

Statement 3: The physical environment is unlike school.

Statement 5: Resources are well distributed and equitable.

Student area:

Statement 9: There is evidence that offending is reduced.

Curriculum area:

Statement 11: Literacy and numeracy are crucial aspects.

Statement 14: There are challenging activities which build success and confidence.

Statement 19: Activities are varied and changing constantly.

Provider area:

Statement 26: Training is viewed as crucial for teachers.

Statement 28: As well as trained teachers there are tutors / alternative educators.

Statement 30: Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes.

Statement 31: There is a male / female gender mix of staff provides appropriate role model.

Statement 32: Government policy and support evident.

Family area:

Statement 33: A relationship is developed with students' families.

Statement 34: The family includes identifying a key member in order to communicate effectively with the family.

Statement 36: Families are participants in the programme.

The distribution of the standard deviations is graphed in Figure 1.2. There appears to be only one distribution centred around a value of 0.60. It is interesting though to inspect the relationship between the standard deviations and the size of the means. In general the

small standard deviations are associated with the means in Cluster one (1.10 to 1.60) and the larger standard deviations are associated with the means in Cluster two (1.65 to 2.30). The implication of this is that the respondents are likely to be in close agreement on the statements that are rated in general as “very important” and to be somewhat more spread about on statements that they rate on average as “important”. There are thus statements (Cluster One) which are perceived to be “very important” by virtually all respondents while there are others on which there is a greater spread of judgements (Cluster two). See Appendix M for a Table that illustrates this in another fashion, eg in Statement 6, *Students maintain attendance and commitment to the programme*, 90 percent say it is “very important”, thus we have a high mean ($m=1.15$) and a small standard deviation, ($s=.49$) because virtually everyone is in agreement that this is very important. In comparison for Statement 9, *Evidence that offending is reduced*, 70 percent account for the combined ratings of “very important” and “important” with a larger standard deviation of 1.21 indicating that although there is agreement of its importance there is a range of responses.

With this distinction in mind it is useful to explore if there are any patterns within each category that distinguishes between those indices that are from Cluster one and Cluster two with those in Cluster one being more definitely important with closer agreement between participants. Some comparisons are now made albeit tentatively as both clusters of indicators were seen of importance. Nevertheless such information could be of assistance to providers of alternative education when faced with ideological and resource decisions.

Trends identified in categories between Cluster one and Cluster two indicator statements

Place where programme operates:

Closer agreement and a higher level of importance was placed upon the provision of emotional safety and having organisation structures in place in comparison with student choice and making the environment less like school.

Student

Closer agreement and a higher level of importance was placed on student achievement, and attendance with an understanding of their development rather than on their offending record.

Curriculum

Closer agreement and a higher level of importance was placed upon organisational matters associated with curriculum rather than content.

Provider

Closer agreement and a higher level of importance was placed upon collaboration and self management of staff in comparison with the mix of staff.

Family

Closer agreement and a higher level of importance was placed upon how family involvement can strengthen support and valuing of the student rather than how families are to be incorporated into the programme as partners.

Such trends are worthy of further explanation in a further research project. The list of indicators are now listed in order of the ratings arising from the two clusters of means. Cluster two indicator statements are in italics.

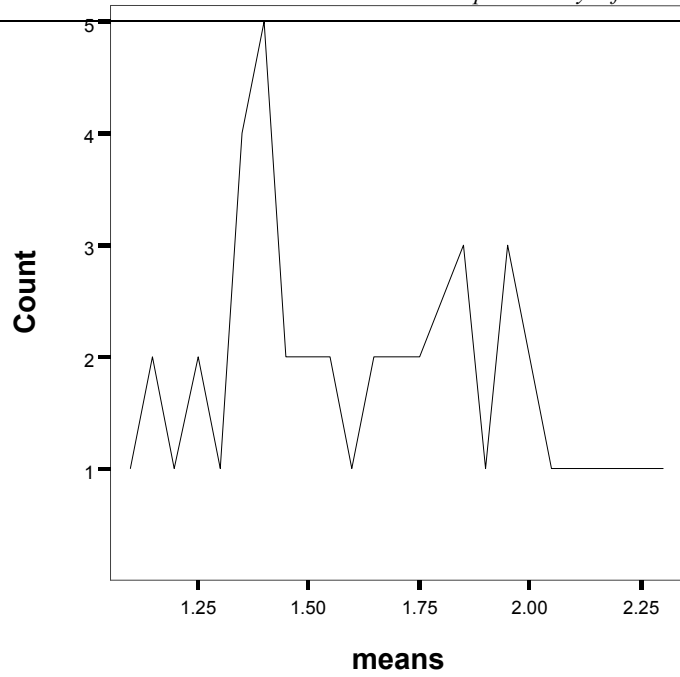


Figure 1.1 Distribution of means on 37 value statements

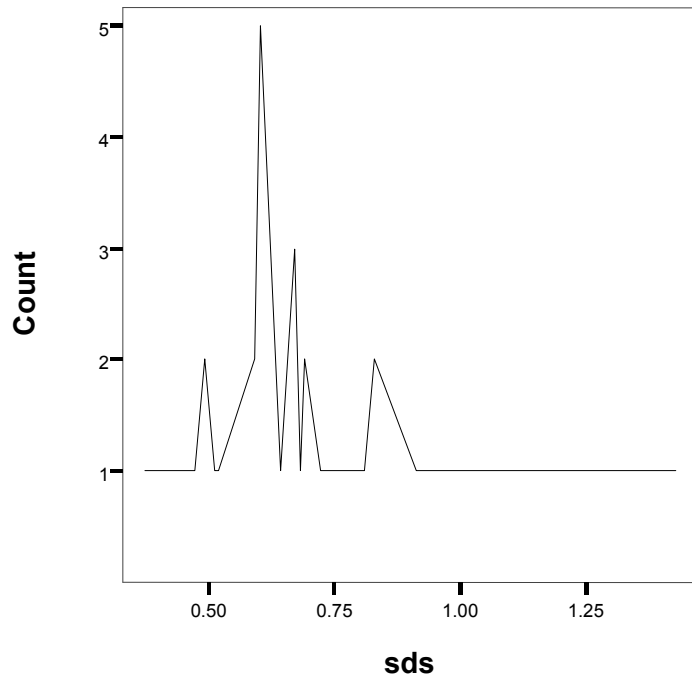


Figure 1.2: Distribution of standard deviations on 37 value statements

Place where programme operates:

- Statement 1: Students experience emotional safety and trust in a welcoming environment where social barriers are removed*
- Statement 4: Guidelines and organisational structures are clear and adhered to*
- Statement 2: Students have a choice of programme*
- Statement 3: The physical environment is unlike school*
- Statement 5: Resources are well distributed and equitable*

Students

- Statement 6: Students' maintain attendance and commitment to the programme*
- Statement 7: Students' achievements and success are valued*
- Statement 8: Recognition of the specific issues of adolescence and the peer group*
- Statement 9: There is evidence that offending is reduced*

Curriculum

- Statement 10: A hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed before students are ready to learn*
- Statement 12: Diagnostic assessment is used to set individual realistic goals*
- Statement 13: A range of supporting subjects*
- Statement 15: There are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce*
- Statement 16: That group teaching methods are used*
- Statement 17: There are very small groupings of students and one to one interaction to provide individual attention*
- Statement 18: That activities proceed at a slower pace*
- Statement 20: There are routines, boundaries and consistency*
- Statement 22: That safety management procedures are followed*
- Statement 11: Literacy and numeracy are crucial aspects*
- Statement 14: There are challenging activities which build success and confidence*
- Statement 19: Activities are varied and changing constantly*

Providers

- Statement 23: Programmes have strong links to support structures*
- Statement 24: There is a team of educators who can work collaboratively*
- Statement 25: Staff can relate well to students*
- Statement 27: Teachers are trained beyond the curricula of the mainstream*
- Statement 29: All staff have effective self-management skills*
- Statement 28: As well as trained teachers there are tutor/alternative educators*
- Statement 30: Specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes*
- Statement 31: There is a male/female gender mix of staff providing appropriate role models*
- Statement 32: Government policy and support evident*

Families

Statement 35: There is recognition sharing and partnership between families and educators for the support of the student

Statement 33: A relationship is developed with students' families

Statement 34: The family includes identifying a key member in order to communicate effectively with the family

Statement 36: Families are participants in the programme

Appendix M: Table of percentages of Likert Scale ratings for indicators

Percentage of respondents choosing each response categories for the 37 statements

Statement	Very Important		Important		Neutral		Little importance		Not Important		Don't know		
	Number	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1		17	85	2	10			1	5				
2		8	40	9	45	2	10	1	5				
3		7	35	7	35	2	10	1	5				
4		9	45	10	50			1	5				
5		13	65	6	30	1	5						
6		18	90	1	5	1	5						
7		14	70	6	30								
8		11	55	9	45								
9		5	25	9	45	4	20	1	5			1	5
10		15	75	3	15	2	10						
11		10	50	6	30	3	15	1	5				
12		12	60	6	30	3	15	1	5				
13		13	65	5	25	1	5	1	5				
14		9	45	7	35	3	15			1	5		
15		13	65	6	30	1	5						
16		12	60	5	25	3	15						
17		13	65	6	30	1	5						
18		13	65	5	25	2	10						
19		9	45	8	40	1	5	1	5	2	10		
20		17	85	2	10	1	5						
21		7	35	10	50	2	10	1	5				
22		17	85	1	5	2	10						
23		13	65	7	35								
24		13	65	6	30	1	5						
25		19	95			1	5						
26		10	50	7	35	2	10			1	5		
27		13	65	6	30	1	5						
28		10	50	6	30	1	5	1	5	2	10		
29		17	85	3	15								
30		10	50	4	20	4	20			1	5	1	5
31		10	50	8	40	2	10						
32		12	60	2	10	4	20			2	10		
33		11	55	7	35	2	10						
34		8	40	11	55	1	5						
35		14	70	5	25	1	5						
36		8	40	3	15	5	25	3	15	1	5		
37		15	75	3	15	3	15						

Appendix N: Quality Indicators (user friendly listing)

QUALITY INDICATORS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES WHAT DOES A QUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME LOOK LIKE?

Quality education programmes have characteristics which can be described according to the following aspects: The indicators are categorised according to importance as expressed by the telephone survey, which appear in the following order:

- 1 The place where the programme operates**
- 2 The students**
- 3 The students' families**
- 4 The programme curriculum**
- 5 The programme providers**

1. The place where the programme operates:

“very important”

- Is welcoming and emotionally safe with social barriers removed.
- Has clear guidelines and organisational structures which are adhered to.

“important”

- Gives students choice, and ownership.
- Is unlike school, informal, and "like home."
- Has well distributed, and equitable funding for resources.

2. The students in the programme:

“very important”

- Maintain attendance and commitment to the programme
- Have their achievements and success valued which boosts self-esteem.

“important”

- Are viewed as individuals, but at the complex lifestage of adolescence with peer group issues and social relationships requiring support.
- Who have been offending have these incidents and convictions noticeably reduced.

5. The students' families:

“very important”

- Receive modelling behaviour from staff which values students' endeavours, as well as newsletters home, feedback, interviews, and work displayed.
- Have a partnership with providers to support the student, and reinforce and enhance learning.

“important”

- Whatever their structure or circumstances enjoy a relationship with programme providers.
- Receive support by identification and communication with a key member.
- Are themselves benefiting from the programme by learning parenting skills and experiencing personal growth, as well as encouraging students by their involvement and interest.

6. The curriculum:

“very important”

- Ensures that a hierarchy of needs is firstly addressed so that students are ready to learn.
- Uses diagnostic assessment to plan programmes that set individual realistic goals, so that students who do achieve are encouraged, rewarded, and extended.
- Include a range of supporting subjects which integrate literacy and numeracy, such as: lifeskills, wellbeing, nutrition, cooking, physical health, science and technology, geography, oral learning, whakapapa, problem solving, stress reduction, conflict resolution, behaviour management, communication skills, anger management, drama, performing arts, art and craft, and music, work station skills, gym, and sports.
- Uses informal group teaching methods with reduced social barriers.
- Uses very small groupings of students, and individual attention.
- Is flexible, proceeding at a slower pace, with timetables that allow immediate dealing with problems, and discuss informally.
- Ensures activities are varied, and changing constantly both outdoor and indoor, using management school, community and , regional facilities in order that students are not disadvantaged by having less opportunity with fewer resources resulting in a reduced curriculum.
- There are routines, and secure boundaries with regard to the structure of the day
- Ensures cultural issues are addressed, both with regard to learning styles, with teachers who share the student's ethnicity, as well as the culture of locality.
- Ensures safety management procedures are followed.

“important”

- Ensures literacy and numeracy, are crucial aspects, taught in authentic contexts.
- Includes challenging activities which build success and confidence, and help students take ownership, particularly regional activities, kayaking, tramping, climbing, caving, mountain biking, high ropes, team sports/ activities with other programme groups or management/consortium schools for team work.
- Ensures there are good transitions between the mainstream and the programme as well as from the programme into the workforce.

5. The providers of the programme:

“very important”

- Are well supported by principal/co-ordinators and specialist teachers as well as community services (health, police, judicial, youth aid professionals), such that a network of colleagues, is in communication daily, providing for student needs and reducing staff stress.
- Are a team with different roles comprising trained teachers supported by alternative educators (members of the particular community who are student mentors and role models).
- Have close, warm, supportive, relationships with students as well as advocating for them.
- Are ideally not only trained teachers but have extra curricular training because their teaching role is qualitatively different on a daily basis. This would encompass such knowledge as conflict resolution, medication, special needs, management of staff, counselling, and behaviour management.
- Will all have effective self management skills, and particular personal attributes of enthusiasm, passion, patience, sense of humour, emotional stability (able to detach from work), creative, and versatile with dedication, vocation, commitment, and are appropriate role models.

“important”

- Are trained teachers, their role being providing pedagogical and curriculum expertise, professional supervision, and advisory expertise.
- Are not all trained teachers. They are tutors/alternative educators. Their role is (with trained teacher support) to engage with students daily, rapidly develop good relationships with them, taking care of their meals, transport, personal problems, family issues, and "hanging out" after class. (These staff may be originally recruited as having shared similar backgrounds, or gang affiliation, and have current network knowledge of their students. Ideally they will be empathetic, energetic and enthusiastic with a vocation for working with wayward youth. In quality programmes they will be inservice trained for their particular role which will include risk management, drug intervention, medication, special needs and behaviour management.

- Will ensure specialist staff who routinely deliver literacy or numeracy programmes are supported by regular staff in their delivery to ensure safety and behaviour management support.
- Ensure the male female gender mix of staff fits group needs.
- Expect continued Government policy support and recognition of their work in pay parity with secondary teacher salaries, where qualifications match.

Appendix O: Guidelines for the development of a student data base

In developing suggestions for a student database (see Appendix K) the quality indicator list has been examined for those areas that are relevant to providing an ongoing record of student interface with the alternative education programme. These areas of the database align with those of the quality indicators. A programme such as file maker pro could be used to develop such a database. How and where the database would be operated is a matter for discussion. In some situations it could not be operated unless the technology within alternative education programmes was upgraded. At this stage it would seem more appropriate that the database would be operated and updated from the managing school. Nevertheless the information on the database would need to be made readily available to staff operating in the associated alternative programmes. As part of empowering the students the updating of the data should ideally be a collaborative exercise between the student and the key staff person.

Area one: Demographic data

DOB:

Age:

Address

Last school attended:

Highest level of schooling completed:

Health status: Any special health conditions

Medication regime:

Ethnicity:

Disability: Any special needs

Area two: Student background and transition

History of schooling:

List each school attended, years, and reasons for leaving

Details on last school:

How long since attending last school:

Form level:

Name of form teacher:

Subjects undertaken at the last school:

Friends that student would like to keep in contact with:

Transition records:

Identify and list any records and reports that have accompanied the student to the alternative education programme

Area three: Student programme/Curriculum

Student interests:

Sports and leisure activities:

Preferred curriculum subjects:

Any formal academic achievements:

Individual programme plan:

Assessment outcomes at entry to the programme as outlined in transition documents in:

Language and languages:

Mathematics:

Science:

Technology:

Social sciences:

Arts:

Health and physical education:

Diagnostic assessment outcomes at entry in lieu of transition documents in:

Language and languages:

Mathematics:

Science:

Technology:

Social sciences:

Arts:

Health and physical education:

Individual programme plan:

Date:

Who attended:

Goals listed:

Preferred learning style:

Staff responsible for actioning goals:

Review data:

Cumulative assessment outcomes as directed by needs of individual student:

Area four: Student/staff interface

Identify the key staff person appointed to support the student:

Identify other staff who support the person across the programme:

List the staff, names and role and point of contact:

Identify any multi-disciplinary personnel who support the person:

List personnel, names and roles and point of contact:

Area four: Student/Family relationship

Identify if any, the key member who is the contact point for the family:

List ways in which the family are involved in the programme:

List strengths of family in participating in the programme, e.g., hear reading, put down hangi: