THE ROLE OF CAREER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE FOR
STUDENTS IN YEAR 13 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
STUDENTS’ CAREER DECISION MAKING

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ABSTRACT

This research examines current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools and determines whether it is relevant and helpful for students during their decision making process by asking the students directly. The role of Careers Advisors is also investigated, the prescribed careers education curriculum examined and their professional qualifications considered.

A qualitative study method was chosen and involved the use of a questionnaire for Careers Advisors, a focus group for Year 13 students, and semi-structured interviews for Year 13 students and those two years post-school.

The findings highlight the very complex nature of careers education and guidance and show there are marked differences in terms of what the students and post-students think they need in order to make informed career decisions and what the Careers Advisors are willing and able to deliver within the secondary sector. Also that students and parents should be consulted as part of any careers education programme and their individual circumstances considered. The study highlights variances within the qualifications of Careers Advisors and careers education curriculum delivery across schools.

This raises a number of implications for Principals, Deans, Careers Advisors and policymakers including the value of consulting students and offering holistic careers education where the student is placed at the centre, the importance of work experience and allowing broad exposure to as many career fields as possible, placing more emphasis on careers education in Year 9 and 10, and educating parents as part of the careers process. The professional qualifications of Careers Advisors and consistent delivery of the curriculum should also be of concern.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CONTENTS

- ABSTRACT..........................................................................................ii
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS......................................................................iii
- TABLE OF CONTENTS.......................................................................iv
- LIST OF TABLES................................................................................viii
- LIST OF FIGURES..............................................................................ix

### CHAPTER ONE

- INTRODUCTION.................................................................................1
  - INTRODUCTION .............................................................................1
  - REASONS FOR THE STUDY .......................................................2
  - RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS ............................................3
  - SCOPE OF STUDY ..........................................................................4
  - BACKGROUND TO PROJECT ......................................................5
  - THESIS ORGANISATION..............................................................7

### CHAPTER TWO

- LITERATURE REVIEW.....................................................................9
  - INTRODUCTION .............................................................................9
  - AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CAREERS EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND .................................................................9
  - POLICY DEVELOPMENT ..............................................................11
  - STUDENT VOICE AND CONSULTATION WITHIN EDUCATION ..............16
  - STUDENT VOICE LINKED TO CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE .................................................................23
  - THE ROLE OF CAREERS ADVISORS AND THE DELIVERY OF CAREERS EDUCATION ..........................................................24
  - CURRENT ISSUES IN CONTEXT: THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM HANDBOOK GUIDELINES ........................................31

### CHAPTER THREE

- METHODOLOGY AND METHODS ....................................................36
  - INTRODUCTION .............................................................................36
  - METHODOLOGY ...........................................................................36
    - Overview ................................................................................36
    - Selection of secondary schools ..............................................39
Sampling.............................................................................................................40
RESEARCH METHODS ......................................................................................43
  1. Questionnaire ............................................................................................43
  2. Focus group interview ..............................................................................45
  3. Semi-structured interviews – Year 13 students .....................................46
DATA ANALYSIS ...............................................................................................47
RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ..........................................................................48
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .........................................................................51
CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................52
CHAPTER FOUR ................................................................................................53
DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS ..................................................................53
INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................53
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ......................................................................53
THE PROCESSES AND INFLUENCES INVOLVED IN STUDENTS’
CAREER DECISION MAKING ........................................................................54
THE RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CAREERS EDUCATION AND
GUIDANCE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR .....................................60
  Useful guidance and support required for making informed career decisions.
  ............................................................................................................................60
  A) Work Experience ....................................................................................61
  B) Visits to expos, tertiary campus programmes, other course providers
  ..........................................................................................................................63
  C) Visits by university liaison staff, past students, motivational speakers
  ..........................................................................................................................66
  D) More information on types of careers available ..................................68

COMPARING THE THEORY AND APPLICATION OF CAREERS
EDUCATION ....................................................................................................71
  1. Describe the term ‘career’ .........................................................................74
  2. One or many careers in a lifetime .............................................................75
  3. Job market changes ..................................................................................76
  4. Lifelong learning ......................................................................................77
  5. Student voice or consultation ..................................................................79
  6. Careers Education and Guidelines Booklet Relevancy .......................81
CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................83
CHAPTER FIVE ................................................................................................84
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1:  Profile of the secondary schools involved in the study ......................... 40

Table 3.2:  A summary of the Careers Advisors’ demographic information.............. 41

Table 3.3:  Post-school participant demographic data ............................................. 43
LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 4.1: Influences on career decision making from the focus group ....................... 55

Fig. 4.2: Influences on career decision making from the Year 13 group .................... 56

Fig. 4.3: Influences on career decision making from the Post-school group .............. 58

Fig. 4.4: Influences on career decision making from the Careers Advisors’ group ....... 59
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Careers education and guidance within secondary schools has historically been given low priority and funding when compared to other curriculum areas. Often there is only one Careers Advisor in a secondary school who is tasked with delivering school-wide and timely careers education and guidance to all year levels. Traditionally the Careers Advisor has moved from a classroom teaching role into careers education with no specific training or background. The Ministry of Education mandated compulsory careers education and guidance for all students from Year 7 to 13 from 2000. However a handbook outlining curriculum guidelines was not published until 2003 and then revised in 2008.

The handbook was written by ‘experts’ in the field and students were not consulted even though they were the main stakeholder. Given that careers decision making is individual, and linked to personal circumstances and frames of reference owned by teenagers, it would be useful to consult with them directly. This would ensure the careers education they are receiving is relevant and current and that it can be applied to their lives and futures to create lifelong learners and competent career managers within a globalised world. It would also be helpful to examine the knowledge, qualifications and delivery techniques of Careers Advisors to see if students are receiving the best careers education and guidance possible with the limited resourcing made available to careers staff.
REASONS FOR THE STUDY

This study was motivated by my work as a Careers Advisor in secondary schools over eight years and realising how poorly regulated the profession was and what little priority many school boards who govern the school and principals who run the day to day operation of the school place on this important curriculum area, resulting in huge variances in what is being delivered to students across secondary schools in New Zealand. I have also been a strong advocate of student voice and social justice linked to democracy. This interest developed through my work with ‘at risk’ youth who were disengaged and failing at school, labelled accordingly, and who generally felt they had no voice or power at school. In my experience, once a personalised career plan was developed and some genuine interest shown, these students turned their attitudes and lives around, started achieving at school and mostly went on to become successful workers and citizens of their communities.

I noted the curriculum was written by adults and without any consultation with students and did not relate well to students lives today. This research therefore explored the processes and influences involved in student’s career decision making to see if the current careers education and guidance programmes in New Zealand are addressing these needs, by asking the students instead of telling them what they need. Vaughan (2003) refers to the “overseas research which has highlighted mismatches between policy and young people’s experiences” (p. 5) within careers education and guidance. This research will also examine whether current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools is effective, timely and relevant to students’ lives today. Research has shown that young people think about careers within the context of life more broadly than qualifications and training, considering lifestyle, relationships, living arrangements, identity and personal circumstance, yet these things are not well covered in current careers education guidelines (Levin, 2000; Patton & McMahon,
2006; Vaughan, 2008). I plan to explore this in more detail with students in Year 13 and two years post-secondary school to see how important these other factors are in determining career goals.

This research may contribute to the greater understanding of what teenagers require from careers education to be better equipped to make relevant career decisions for the complex and dynamic world of work today and to also highlight the changes required for Careers Advisors to deliver a more inclusive and appropriate form of careers education. This may also provide sufficient evidence to start the dialogue needed to challenge the Ministry of Education’s current guidelines set down in the Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools booklet, published in 2008 which I believe is out of date and lacking in detail based on the literature I have reviewed and my own experience of working in the careers field for many years.

**RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS**

This research examines whether or not the current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools is relevant and helpful for students during their decision making process by asking the students directly what it is they want and need. The research will also examine the role of Careers Advisors and their understanding of the influences and processes which affect students during their career decision making, the qualifications they hold and their understanding and delivery of career theory, as prescribed in the handbook.

Question 1: To investigate the processes and influences involved in students’ experiences of career decision making in Year 13 and two years post-secondary school.
Question 2: To examine students’ perceptions of the relevance of current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools.

Question 3: To examine careers advisors understanding of the processes and influences of students’ career decision making, what they currently deliver, the usefulness of the current Ministry of Education handbook guidelines for careers education and to consider the relevance of professional qualifications.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This research examined what the students themselves thought about the careers education and guidance they received at secondary school as they prepared to transition from school in their final year. The students were also consulted on any areas where they thought there could be improvement to make the education they received more relevant and to better assist them with their future career decision making. This was achieved by hosting a focus group of Year 13 students from one secondary school and then running a series of semi-structured interviews with Year 13 students from two different schools.

The study also consulted students who had left secondary school two years prior using semi-structured interviews to examine what they gained from the careers advice they received at school, whether it had been relevant and resulting in good decisions and whether it would equip them for lifelong learning and robust future career management. The students also had the opportunity to identify opportunities for future improvement within careers education and any areas they felt were missing when they were making their decisions.
A group of Careers Advisors were sent a questionnaire to examine their qualifications, experience, what they thought students needed to make sound career decisions and to look briefly at their knowledge of careers theory as prescribed in the Ministry of Education handbook.

My role as a researcher was to consider the different kinds of meanings that emerged from the focus group, interviews and questionnaire data and to identify common themes and issues. This implicitly positions this research alongside qualitatively-orientated researchers as I will be interpreting the data and building meaning based on the participants’ individual contributions.

**BACKGROUND TO PROJECT**

Although the National Educational Guidelines made clear reference to careers education, it was not until 1999 that it became a requirement for schools to offer careers education to all secondary school students and by 2000 this was mandated to include all students from Year 7 and above (Lynes, 2001; Smith, 2007). In 2003 the Ministry of Education consulted widely with school Careers Advisors, Principals and Career Services Rapuara to write a handbook to guide schools. They published the *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, (2003)* handbook to assist in the planning and delivery of careers education and guidance, but they did not consult students or parents as part of the process (Vaughan & Gardiner, 2007).

The handbook was revised in 2008 but the student and parent stakeholders were again not consulted, with assumptions made by policymakers and school administrators that careers education was a high priority for students and should be delivered like other areas of the
school curriculum, but without proper funding and clear implementation guidelines (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Watts, 2001). Research shows that careers education and guidance policy has been developed without any meaningful consultation with students and is just done to them as part of their general schooling (Levin, 2000; Vaughan, 2003; Howieson & Semple, 2000).

The literature suggests students should be at the centre of their career journey with individualised programmes within a narrative constructivist mode of delivery to ensure buy-in and relevancy (Levin; 2000; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). The context of this research is to ask students directly what they need to make informed careers decisions in the secondary sector and what they understand about current careers theory which will help them to become effective future career managers and to then compare this with students who left school two years ago and with the views of Careers Advisors currently working in this field. There is a gap in the literature in regard to student voice and actually asking them what they need to make informed careers decisions in this emerging curriculum area. Vaughan (2003) asserts relatively little research has been done where young people’s experiences are placed at the centre and she suggests that careers education “research and policy is structured by quite particular concepts of youth, adulthood and transition”, (p.1) which has been generated by adults.

The study also investigates what Careers Advisors consider are the main influences on student’s decision making, what qualifications they hold and how they deliver the careers theory and guidance prescribed in the Ministry of Education handbook to allow for direct comparison from the students’ perspectives and to explore an area of research where little has been done in the New Zealand context to date.
THEESIS ORGANISATION

The first chapter is a brief introduction providing the reasons for the study, the research aims and questions, the scope of the study and the background to the project.

Chapter Two presents a critical review of the literature relevant to the research topic covering firstly an historical perspective of the development of careers education and guidance in New Zealand, then briefly looks at policy development, then examines the body of literature pertaining to student voice from a mostly international research base, followed by literature from both New Zealand and overseas which links student voice to careers education, then covers literature on the role of Careers Advisors, qualifications and current careers education theory.

Chapter Three outlines the research design, methods, sampling and data analysis. Justification is provided for the use of a qualitative approach for investigating careers education and guidance processes, influences and delivery systems within the secondary school sector. The issues of triangulation, reliability and validity are discussed and ethical considerations are outlined.

Chapter Four contains the research findings and an analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires, focus group interview and semi-structured interviews. The findings are organised under three key themes: the processes and influences involved in students’ career decision making, the relevance of current careers education and guidance in the secondary school sector and comparing the theory and application of careers education.
Chapter Five discusses the significant findings to emerge from the data gathered and analysed during this research, with reference to the themes identified in the literature.

Chapter Six presents the conclusions which are linked to the research questions and then lists the recommendations resulting from this study. This final chapter also discusses the limitations of this research and suggests areas for further study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The literature review starts with an overview of the historical aspects of careers education in the New Zealand context and then considers policy development and what has influenced this from a governmental and educational point of view. Literature on student voice and consultation within education is then examined from a local and an overseas perspective. The concept of student voice linked to careers education and what involvement students have had in the development of curriculum and the ownership of their individual career journeys is then explored. The role of Careers Advisors, the current curriculum and theory linked to careers education and guidance in New Zealand, the delivery modes and the importance of professional qualifications will also be investigated.

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CAREERS EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Guidance in secondary schools can be traced back to the early 1930s where it emerged as an undefined and informal relationship between teachers and students. Employment difficulties for school leavers in the 1930s at the end of the Great Depression highlighted the need for guidance in schools and the Vocational Guidance Service was created to support the transition into the workforce (Lynes, 2001). In 1948 regulations were introduced to provide for the appointment of Careers Advisors in all state schools with rolls over 200 and the Department of Education Psychological Service was set up to support this initiative (Lynes, 2001).
Increased school roles, teacher shortages and an expansion of the school curriculum during the late 1950s resulted in a pilot scheme where two schools were granted a new position dedicated to counselling purposes. By 1966 the Government had established a guidance counselling service for secondary schools. In 1971 a report released by the Department of Education showed there were 265 Careers Advisors working in state secondary schools, plus 53 Guidance Counsellors who were also responsible for careers education work (Department of Education, 1971).

During the late 1970s, rising unemployment encouraged schools to provide work exploration and job-seeking skills to those students considered most at risk of becoming unemployed, and senior rolls swelled as more students were forced to stay on at school. There was an increasing demand for schools to broaden the curriculum being offered to senior students and to assist with employment by linking more closely with employers (Daley & Moorhouse, 1987). This led to a 24-million dollar package being announced by the Government in 1987 to assist with the school-to-work transition and to allow for expansion of the careers education and guidance service being offered to students (Lynes, 2001).

The budget being provided to schools was not tagged specifically for careers education and with the Tomorrow’s Schools initiative introduced in 1989, each school was able to self manage and decide where this money would be spent (Wylie, 1997). At this time the curriculum for careers education and guidance was not formalised and although the National Administration Guideline (NAG 1f) and the National Educational Guidelines (NEGs 1 and 3) made clear reference to careers education, it was not compulsory and was a low priority for most secondary schools (Lynes, 2001). In 1991 the Government released plans for a comprehensive reform of school curriculum that would bring schooling in line with the needs
of the modern competitive international economy to support economic growth in New Zealand in a document entitled *Education for the 21st Century* (Ministry of Education, 1994). However, it was not until 1999 that it became a requirement for schools to offer careers education to all secondary school students and by 2000 this was mandated to include all students from Year 7 and above (Lynes, 2001; Smith, 2007).

This overview demonstrates the rather slow evolution of careers education within New Zealand and the low priority and status given to this area of the curriculum by the government and secondary school leaders. The implications of this will be explored in this research both from a student’s perspective and also from the Career Advisor’s perspective.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Careers education policy is often linked to the economic interests of government, and students are rarely consulted when policy is being developed (Vaughan, 2003; Watts, 2001). This raises a number of issues which are outlined in the literature. Ministry of Education transition policy from school tends to focus on an endpoint as being either a job or higher level study which incorporates a linear model of matching skills and interests to a career outcome (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). However, research shows that students often experience a multi-directional set of pathways which affect their decision making (Anderson, 2005; Boyd & McDowall, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). They are influenced by school experiences such as Gateway (a work experience programme) and other work experience programmes, Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) taster programmes, lunchtime seminars provided by tertiary providers, part-time work, Careers Advisors, teachers, Deans, parents, peers, media, socioeconomic circumstances,
academic achievement, belief in self, gender, culture and race (Patton & McMahon, 2006; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

Noyes (2005) asserts that careers education and guidance have always been linked to, and informed by, government policy and economic indicators such as employment, economic growth, the knowledge economy, globalisation, skill shortages and productivity, rather than individuals. Thomson and Holdsworth (2003) suggest little focus has been given to students as individuals and how they navigate towards employment. Gottfredson (2004) agrees and suggests that “one-size-fits-all instruction and assistance works no better in career education than in academic, health or other kinds of education” (as cited in Smith, 2007, p.5). Meury (2010) concurs and finds that students need guidance to make decisions that fit them as individuals. Failure to appreciate the deeper meanings of events and young people’s frames of reference, particularly those who are socially excluded or subject to intervention can have catastrophic consequences for the individual and ultimately their community (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

For young people to realise their full working potential which is linked to future economic and social outcomes, appropriate careers education and guidance is important (Horne, 2010; Vaughan, 2003). Watts (2001) asserts that unemployment, crime, incarceration and mental illness are often associated with youth who are disengaged at school and lost in transition. Governments around the world are concerned with young people, referred to as NEET status – Not in Education, Employment or Training - as the economic and social costs for this disengagement are high (Horne, 2010; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Watts, 2001). Vaughan (2008) shows in a recent New Zealand study that careers education is targeted at certain groups and is more about intervention for at-risk young people, rather than careers education
for all. She also suggests the majority of Maori and Pasifika students but less than half of the Pakeha/NZ European and Asian students reported finding their time with the Careers Advisor helpful (Vaughan, 2008).

Research shows that careers education and guidance policy has been developed without any meaningful consultation with students and is just done to them as part of their general schooling (Anderson, 2005; Boyd & McDowall, 2004; Levin, 2000; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Vaughan, 2003). In 1991 Michael Fullan posed the question ‘What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered?’ alerting policymakers and educationalists to this valuable information source (cited in Macbeath, Myers & Demetriou, 2001). Vaughan and Roberts (2007) suggest that assumptions made by policymakers and school administrators that subject choice selections, future planning and exploring careers are a high priority for students, are misguided and flawed by adult expectations. In 2003 the Ministry of Education consulted widely with school Careers Advisors, Principals, and associated government departments including Career Services Rapuara, to create a handbook to guide schools.

The Ministry of Education published the Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools handbook to assist in the planning and delivery of careers education and guidance, but they did not consult students or parents as part of this process (Vaughan & Gardiner, 2007). This seems odd given that there were several New Zealand studies available at the time which demonstrated the strong influence of parents on career choices and overseas literature which supported the need to take a more holistic and inclusive approach to careers education. The Beyond School project found that the influence of family members and relatives stood out as the information source most used by the largest proportion of students
and this was further confirmed by another New Zealand study completed the following year (Boyd, Chalmers & Kumekawa, 2001; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2002). Researchers have found that students’ experience of school and the learning within it was strongly shaped by the cultures and practices of their everyday lives, including music, friends, media and religious beliefs so policymakers must understand these influences in order to fully engage students within careers education (Anderson, 2005; Boyd & McDowall, 2004; Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Levin, 2000; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Thomson & Gunter, 2005). Most research into schooling that has investigated both the pupil and teacher perspective has highlighted a mismatch or divergence in their views (Howieson & Semple, 2000; Vaughan, 2003). This study attempts to address this gap in the literature by asking the students directly what influences their careers decision making, to help understand their individual frames of reference and readiness for careers education.

Bullock and Wikeley (2001) found that Year 9 students involved in a study in the United Kingdom expressed concern that they were being pressured to make subject decisions that they did not feel ready to make and they realised their thoughts about the future were likely to change, so they felt careers education was a waste of time and irrelevant. Repetto (2001) notes that student readiness and maturity should be considered within careers education and also what is being delivered.

Soo Hoo (1993) suggests “educators have forgotten the important connection between teachers and students, listening instead to outside experts whilst overlooking the treasure in their own backyards” (p. 389). Howieson and Semple (2000) refer to the neglect of the student perspective on schooling, including their experience of pastoral care or guidance and suggest this may relate to the low power and status of children’s and pupil’s voice. In the
context of the historical perspective, developmental psychologists purported that the
cognitive abilities of children were limited and therefore they should not be consulted and
this view has largely remained when it comes to policy making in education (Howieson &
Semple, 2000; Soo Hoo, 1993; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

In the overseas context, research conducted in Australia and Scotland is briefly examined in
regard to policy development. Thomson and Holdsworth (2003) refer to the Australian
context which in the 1980’s saw a move to promote student engagement and reduce
alienation of students by getting them more involved in their local school curriculum
development. However, a new drive to create a national curriculum saw the demise of school-
based decision making in the 1990s, with students’ and teachers’ voices silenced, in favour of
the old order of hierarchy and national credentials which gave the government and
universities back their control as the gate-keepers of educational pathways (Thomson &
Holdsworth, 2003).

A key focus in the literature on student consultation relates to changes in school
accountability, improving school performance and raising attainment (Howieson & Semple,
include the area of careers education and guidance and recommend that pupils and parents be
involved in the process (Howieson & Semple, 2000). A study was undertaken to get the
students’ views on the guidance system in Scotland, to prove that student voice could add
value during the evaluation process. Howieson and Semple (2000) concluded that young
people have the capacity to contribute to school evaluation in a meaningful way, and that
their perspective can be different from that of teachers and therefore essential if a school is to
get a complete picture.
In summary, policy development for careers education and guidance has been largely linked to economic and political factors. Careers education has only been compulsory in schools in New Zealand since 2000 and curriculum development has been focussed on a one-size-fits-all approach. The literature highlights that student voice and consultation has been largely absent in policy development and as a consequence the influences and frames of reference of secondary students within the context of career decision making are largely unknown. These issues form an important basis for this study.

**STUDENT VOICE AND CONSULTATION WITHIN EDUCATION**

Another theme in the literature is on student voice. This section briefly covers the history of perceptions related to student voice which suggest students are not capable of voicing their own opinions related to schooling, through to more recent studies which demonstrate the value of asking students for their input. It also examines how students should be consulted, and some of the techniques and pitfalls associated with student consultation.

Authors such as Kirby (2001) assert that much research has been done on children and young people in the traditional forms of observation, measurements and tests and the views of adults have been relied on to represent those children but little research has involved the views of children. As long ago as 1938, Dent argued that “young people have a personal interest in their education, something to contribute to its problems and a point of view we should treat with greater deference” (as cited in Macbeath, Myers & Demetriou, 2001). Kane and Maw (2005) suggest that “good practice must necessarily be informed by students’ needs and therefore by consultation with students” (p. 311). They refer to the work of Russell Bishop who shows that young people are able to articulate and theorise the important elements of
schooling and that teaching and learning can be improved by listening to students and acknowledging cultural capital (Kane & Maw, 2005).

Noyes (2005) notes that The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) ensures the rights of children to actively participate in all matters concerning them, and that student perspectives should therefore be considered when developing educational guidelines and programmes. A global perspective suggests this relates to democracy and citizenship rights which are slowly being recognised within the school sector but with reluctance, and often only related to school accountability and performance, rather than genuine student consultation (Fielding, 2001; Kirby, 2001; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003).

One way to address this is using participatory research which allows teachers to “work both with students and for them...to create a dialogic and interactive encounter that goes beyond a passive process controlled by adults” (Prieto, 2001, p. 89). This allows education to be seen as a genuine, demanding partnership between teachers and their students, in which they learn with and from each other (Prieto, 2001). She asserts that we should not only treat students as equals, but also as people who have something different and important to offer, whose minds are already active with all that they have lived and are living, whose views are of value and relevant (Prieto, 2001). The study demonstrated that when students are actively involved and their voices heard, they become agents for their own change (Prieto, 2001). Prieto (2001) also suggests that widening student disaffection within society requires a more collaborative approach to education: “the future of vibrant democracy in and through education depends on it” (p. 90).
Thomson and Gunter (2006) suggest that although schools acknowledge they must prepare students for the world of citizenship, work and families, the dominant discourse of human capital is ignored. They argue that pupil voice should be sought through enduring commitments to democratic agency, rather than just focussing on school improvement and accountability (Thomson & Gunter, 2006). Howieson and Semple (2000) assert that evaluation should not become something else in a pupil’s school life that is done to them, so that schools can be seen to comply with government policy; students must participate and even own the process to ensure buy-in and feel like they are a valued part of a democratic institution.

Students considered at risk of leaving school without qualifications and any careers direction are also examined within the literature. A study in the United States set out to find a way for high schools to improve students’ educational outcomes. When a group of students who were failing at school were asked why they believed they were unsuccessful, their responses became a critical step towards understanding how to reach these youth (Mitra, 2001). Mitra (2001) showed that student voices gave a clearer picture of the reasons that some students struggle in school and called into question the assumption that failing students do not care about their future. This study will help to reveal what students find important in terms of process and information when they are making career decisions by consulting with them directly.

Another study in the United States designed to consult students on what hinders their participation in student voice and what improves it, provided a deeper insight into the imbalances found in schools and the necessity of student input from the fringes to help develop a more inclusive practice (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Lensmire, 1998). The study
highlights the powerful influence of racial, class and gender identity on student participation (Silva, 2001). Research by Howieson and Semple (2000) suggests that efforts to increase student voice and participation can actually reinforce a hierarchy of power and privilege as articulate, white, middle class students are more likely to be chosen to speak, or have the confidence to volunteer to represent all students, and so the status quo remains.

The notion of student voice has been critiqued by Fielding (2001) who asserts that student voice is a misleading term that raises issues around validity and the degree to which some students can speak on behalf of others. He proposes “clusters of questions that seek to probe the rhetorics and realities of student voice” that should be used as part of any research design (Fielding, 2001, p. 100). He asks “to what extent do the perceptions and intentions of students who are most often readily listened to reflect the experience of those students for whom school is an uncongenial or alienating place?” (Fielding, 2001, p. 101). Researchers also examine what students are allowed to speak about within the confines of organisational guidance and constraints and who frames the discussion questions which they suggest are mostly designed by external researchers, or by teachers for teachers (Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003; Vaughan, 2003). Fielding (2001) suggests that “student focus groups and questionnaires are about matters that concern teachers’, governments and almost anyone other than students themselves” (p. 103).

The way in which the research is conducted with students has also been highlighted in the literature. Lensmire (1998) raises the issue of students answering questions under duress and in the “shadow of teacher scrutiny and evaluation” (p. 261). Researchers are also concerned with the type of language used as “some young people may not express opinions and ideas in ways that adults find acceptable” but by imposing a frame of formal language, many views
will be lost (Fielding, 2001, p. 102; Mitra, 2001). The type of language used in framing questions for questionnaires and interviews should also be piloted by students to ensure they understand the meaning and are not restricted, alienated or patronised in the process of student consultation (Fielding, 2004; Gunter & Thomson, 2007). Also, as mentioned earlier in Mitra’s work, there is a danger of adults misinterpreting students’ meaning when converting it into adult language (Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2001; Raymond, 2001).

The literature also considers the way in which researchers listen to student voices. Fielding (2001) asks the question – “who is listening, why are they listening and how are they listening?” (p. 102). Those in power too often do not listen, even if they hear what is said, and many opportunities for student voice such as student councils are considered tokenistic by students as they have no power to make changes (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Fielding, 2001). Fielding (2001) suggests that in reality the international upsurge of student consultation has more to do with “fear, control and a spurious discourse of stakeholder involvement than a desire to nurture creativity, encourage greater freedom of thought and action, or usher a genuine transformation of schools and workplaces as sites of shared power and responsibility” (p. 103). He concludes that too often those in power are listening as a way of gaining information which is used to contain and control (accumulation), re-describe or reconfigure students to bind them more securely into the status quo (accommodation), and reaffirm their superiority over students. Fielding (2001) suggests that “the frameworks of performativity provide both the motive and the means of a carefully constrained consultation” to demonstrate compliance rather than genuine student voice which could lead to mutual learning (p. 103). This study endeavours to listen to the students to empower them and allow them to offer suggestions for improvement for future students within the area of careers education and guidance.
The arguments of some writers who oppose the use of student voice, as outlined earlier, because they believe students are not capable of articulating useful views, are being challenged as new research involving students emerges to demonstrate positive interactions and insightful results. Kirby (2001) asserts that there “are so few attempts to understand children’s lives in their own terms and taking children’s own words at face value, and as a primary source of knowledge about their experiences” and yet when they are consulted, the partnerships are fruitful and empowering of all involved in the process (p. 74). Prieto (2001) showed that consulting with students helps to understand their points of view which are often very different from adults. Raymond (2001) notes that involving students in the design and data collection stages of the research in their school and implementing the changes they suggested has resulted in “a profound change in the way that staff engage with students at the school” (p. 61). MacBeath, Myers and Demetriou (2001) suggest the concept of student voice has enjoyed a growing currency in the United Kingdom due to recognition of how little has been done in the past to value students’ viewpoints and as a response to a changing social climate where young people are demanding to be heard.

Fielding (2001) suggests we must also consider the skills and open-mindedness of politicians and educationalists to embrace this new form of learning partnership which is more than just teaching as delivery, but rather learning as a collaborative making of meaning at all levels within the educational hierarchy. He and other researchers assert that this will need to become a practical expression of an educational relationship to lead to a more democratic way of life within the education sector and the community (Fielding, 2001; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003). Kirby (2001) suggests “democracy is best learned in a democratic setting where participation is encouraged, where views can be openly expressed and discussed, and where there is freedom of expression for pupils and teachers” (p. 74). Prieto (2001) asserts
that “a renewed commitment to strong education for democracy and to a new partnership between schools and student democracy is required to move Chile in the direction of a revitalised democratic community” (p. 87).

Fielding (2001) concludes that student voice can offer teachers and others a creative practical approach to the adult-centred bureaucracy that cramps much of modern schooling, as it is not determined by government agendas or markets. The student voice movement has within it the possibility of educational transformation but first we must let go the moribund framework of school effectiveness and embrace a person-centred education where staff and students work in partnership to create a learning community (Fielding, 2001). To achieve this, researchers argue that safe spaces must be created where teachers and students can meet one another as equals, as genuine partners creating shared meanings and dialogic encounter (Fielding, 2004; Gunter & Thomson, 2007).

In the New Zealand context, Kane and Maw (2005) assert that in spite of widespread curriculum reform, schools have not changed much over the last twenty years but the students they serve have, so teaching may not be connecting with the reality of students’ lives and interests today. They also suggest that “good teaching practice must necessarily be informed by students’ needs and therefore by consultation with students” (p. 311). They refer to a doctoral study by Gavin Brown who showed that teachers and students in New Zealand secondary schools talk past each other and that there is a need for greater understanding of students’ perspectives of teaching and learning and for research that consults students directly (Kane & Maw, 2005). Levin (2000) notes that “the absence of the student experience from current educational discourse limits the insight of educators as well as that of students” (p. 160). This study will enable student voice in a process of consultation with those who are the
key stakeholders and the literature will help to inform the design methodology when consulting with students.

**STUDENT VOICE LINKED TO CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE**

The literature on student voice also links to careers education and guidance where it is suggested students should be consulted in order to take a holistic approach, as each student has a different set of influences which affect decision making and a constructivist approach is more likely to affect buy-in from the students.

Vaughan (2003) states that adolescence is a critical time of self discovery and future planning, so consulting students on how careers education and guidance could be delivered and what is important to students may enhance both acceptance of, and action on, the advice provided by career educators. This is also referred to as ‘constructivist learning’ which requires students to take a more active role in the construction of their learning (Levin, 2000). Levin (2000) asserts that “students’ work in schools cannot be separated from the changes happening in their lives outside of school; that changes in perceived work opportunities or family structures or gender roles have powerful impacts on how students see and respond to what the school provides” (p. 158). Individuals do not live in isolation and their social system, plus societal system, influence career development and choices (Patton & McMahon, 2006). Vaughan (2003) notes relatively little research has been done where young people’s experiences are placed at the centre and she suggests that careers education “research and policy is structured by quite particular concepts of youth, adulthood and transition”, (p. 1) which has been generated by adults. She also suggests it is not so much what pathways young people choose, or where they go to after school in a traditional tracking research project that count, but rather how they navigate these pathways (Vaughan, 2003).
Today’s emphasis on individual responsibility and choice mean young people are under increasing pressure to make informed career decisions at a relatively young age which can have far-reaching consequences for their futures. Access to relevant careers education and to work in partnership with parents, teachers and Careers Advisors is therefore essential to good decision making (Horne, 2010; Vaughan, 2003). Vaughan and Roberts (2007) assert a career journey is a very complex, non-linear pathway which takes many twists and turns over a person’s lifetime and we need to better understand the role of “chaos or unpredictability in career decisions and what tools might be useful to help people manage it” (p. 103). Patton and McMahon (2006) suggest that by consulting students we can better understand their personal situations, what affects their career decision making, and what careers education and support is relevant to ensure lifelong learning and success in an ever changing and dynamic world of work.

This study will draw on key issues identified in the literature on student voice and consultation which demonstrate mismatches in the thinking and needs of teachers and students, the importance of consulting with students to get their perspective and to understand their frames of reference in regard to careers education and decision making.

**THE ROLE OF CAREERS ADVISORS AND THE DELIVERY OF CAREERS EDUCATION**

Earlier, the historical development of the role of Careers Advisors was outlined. Careers Advisors are employed by secondary schools to deliver the careers education and guidance curriculum as set down by the Ministry of Education and to also offer careers counselling, provide information, organise speakers, careers expos and other offsite programmes for students to help them make informed careers decisions and to ensure they transition
successfully from secondary school and continue to be lifelong learners. Lynes (2001) and Vaughan (2003) both suggest Careers Advisors are often constrained by government, school and board policy, low funding, lack of timetabling allocation, low curriculum priority, poor resource allocation and often, low status.

A review conducted by de Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) in California suggests “Principals and counsellors reported varying degrees of awareness of national and state standards, guidelines, and laws that might affect the availability of career development services for students” (p. 12). Their study also showed that less than half the principals and counsellors reported offering a curriculum for career development and a career development service for all students at their school, and only ten percent reported using assessment instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of their career development activities, programs, or tools (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009). They conclude that providing career development information for all students regarding the various careers and industries in the state is not a high priority for school districts, schools and school boards (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009). They suggest that careers education should not be an add-on and that it should be “an integrated mechanism that is incorporated into the curriculum for all faculty, counsellors, and administration to embrace as part of their overall school culture” (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009, p. 4). This inconsistency of policy interpretation relating to careers counselling and careers education delivery has also been demonstrated in New Zealand secondary schools (Lynes, 2001; Vaughan, 2003).

Lim and Patton (2006) assert that there is a gap between what career practitioners and clients expect. Their study suggests that “career practitioners underestimated the preparedness of clients to be committed, realistic and open to learning during a career counselling interview”
In addition they “overestimated the unrealistic expectations of clients concerning the career decision-making process and the role of the career counsellor in this process” (p. 12). They suggest that “clients have a firm expectation concerning the facilitative behaviours and characteristics of the career counsellor about obtaining a concrete outcome from a careers counselling interview and playing an active role in the career counselling process” (Lim & Patton, 2006, p. 12). However the career counsellors felt clients believed they were there to solve the client’s needs by providing information and advice through a quick and simple process, when they did not see themselves as experts who solve problems by providing information alone, or by telling the client what to do with their lives, thus creating a gap in expectations (Lim & Patton, 2006). Lim and Patton (2006) recommend that clients be educated on the process and that they leave an interview with a tangible outcome, such as a written plan of action, strategies and skills for seeking further information, handouts, brochures and a list of contacts; also that career counsellors need to have formal training to provide the level of facilitative support expected by clients.

Kane and Maw (2005) and Smith (2007) also claim there are tensions between the ways that adults and students understand learning and what is relevant to youth today, coupled with government policy linked to economic and social considerations which impact on society. Levin (2000) suggests that careers education is just ‘done’ to students for their own good, with the assumption made that experts within the wider education field ‘know best’, in what is a very hierarchical system of decision making related to education policy and guidelines, funding and delivery. Brooker and MacDonald (1999) refer to the Australian context where curriculum is developed at central sites by people deemed by education authorities to have relevant expertise (usually teachers, bureaucrats, university educators, employers and in some cases business interests) but students are not considered a stakeholder.
Vaughan and Roberts (2007) suggest that the way Career Advisors operate needs to change to become more student focussed. Patton and McMahon (2006) assert that career counselling needs to change to be more relevant, moving towards constructivist approaches which focus on all aspects of the whole individual and moving away from the counsellor as expert and towards a more narrative approach where the students create their personal story and the counsellor helps facilitate. This would ensure student ownership and buy-in and would allow students to explore their values, socioeconomic situations, culture, gender and beliefs as part of the career decision process (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

Levin (2000) claims the education needed to function effectively in labour markets is similar to that needed to participate effectively as citizens in society and that constructivist ideas about learning will help facilitate this process. He suggests “successful learning and work environments...are meaningful and motivating for learners; taking into account what learners bring; interweaving knowledge, problem solving and application; fostering active learner involvement and allowing learners to control their own performance” (p. 161). He refers to low levels of engagement relating to students dropping out of school and that most students are more motivated when they have some control over their education (Levin, 2000).

A recent report provided by the Southern Regional Education Board (2009) for schools in the United States suggests one size does not fit all students and that a multiple-pathways approach which offers a rigorous academic foundation combined with rich, authentic learning drawn from a career field of particular interest to the student is more likely to keep them engaged with their education and attending school. The report suggests that for students to be ready for tomorrow they must be able to use their minds and their hands, be problem solvers, think critically, analyse data and communicate effectively and the best way to achieve this is
through authentic work placements linked to rigorous academic learning and holistic careers education (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009). The report also suggests that if students are to succeed, counsellors, teachers and parents must join in helping them set post-high school goals and the business community should link with their local schools to create authentic learning experiences in the workplace (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009).

Other researchers support this view of combining individual career plans with academic goals and work-based experience. De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) suggest schools need to link with businesses to provide experiential learning for students as employers feel learning is focussed too heavily on theory and that “students gain an understanding of the industry they may be interested in working in and they provide opportunities for students to explore their career interests” (p. 19). Horne (2010) agrees, posing the question, “Are the students in the American public education system sufficiently acquiring literacy, numeracy and technological skills to survive global competition... and to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce?” (p. 10). She suggests that schools need to keep up with technology, and make the core skills relevant to students, to show them that their academic achievement is directly tied to their later quality of life and the best way to reinforce this is through placement in an industry relevant to the student’s career interests (Horne, 2010). De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) agree, suggesting “the rapid and continual changes in technology might be used to shape how career-oriented information is presented in the frameworks” (p. 5). Horne (2010) also asserts that courses which were once considered of secondary importance and often for less academic students “are now becoming center stage in 21st century learning” (p. 11). Students need to understand that the core skills learned in class are linked directly to their career interests, which should increase motivation to perform well
academically and therefore ensure students reach their highest potential (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Horne, 2010).

Meury (2009) suggests “post-secondary education is not a one-size-fits-all proposition, rather it’s a personal, individual investment, and students need guidance to make decisions that fit” (p. 48). She also asserts that students and their families need to be better informed about their options, the costs, and future earning potential and that advisors should encourage them to think as broadly as possible about the future, and understand that the right education may not look anything like the traditional college experience (Meury, 2009). Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) note that school counsellors need time to strengthen school programmes involving family and community and this may require a reduction in some other traditional careers education tasks and a commitment from school boards and principals to make this an official component of school organisation to promote student learning. They also suggest that in order to develop positive and productive interactions of home, school and community to produce the best results for students, there needs to be organisational structures and processes, quality plans, activities, and implementations, and the results must be measured, monitored and continually improved in all schools (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010).

A recent guide paper aimed to assist with accelerating college and career readiness in low-performing schools in the United States also suggests schools should be monitored and students assessed to see where they rate on the career readiness scale, to allow for school improvement of careers education and delivery, using indicators to create meaningful public reporting on career readiness goals (Hassel, 2009). The report suggests the indicators should be “clear, ambitious standards for college and career readiness benchmarked against the real
demands of the global economy and society, and against schools’ progress and performance” (p. 6), and that schools should be ranked accordingly (Hassel, 2009).

Vaughan (2003) asserts that the challenge is to find a middle ground which allows for the consultation and empowerment of students to make informed choices for their futures as individuals, whilst also supporting Career Advisors to reflect on the processes and influences affecting youth today and to keep abreast with research and emerging careers trends when they are constrained by time, a lack of resourcing and are often isolated within a school environment. The Ministry of Education suggests that professional development for Careers Advisors should be encouraged in the areas of careers counselling, gaining a formal qualification in careers education and joining a professional career industry association (Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008).

Thompson and Zulich (1990) show that “there has been a significant evolutionary change in emphasis from vocational guidance to career guidance and development” which redirects the emphasis for counselling and educational programmes from “remedial efforts to developmental, lifelong activities” (p. 122). Their study indicates that seminars and papers on career development, personnel evaluation and professional training have increased significantly but topics such as career education and career guidance have declined. In a recent edition of Career Edge, a publication supported by Career Services Rapuara, Dale Furbish, who heads the career development postgraduate programme at the Auckland University of Technology, agreed with an interview statement by Wendy Patton, an Australian expert within the field of careers education who suggests a postgraduate qualification would enhance the careers profession (Career Edge, 2010).
This research will draw on areas of the literature which challenge the way careers education is delivered in secondary schools, who is delivering it and the relevancy of the curriculum and current teaching and counselling practices. It will also examine what Careers Advisors think the processes and influences are on secondary students whom they advise, whether they understand current theory and what qualifications they currently hold to investigate whether this affects their understanding of careers theory and delivery.

CURRENT ISSUES IN CONTEXT: THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM HANDBOOK GUIDELINES

The *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2008) handbook outlines a number of key concepts and theoretical definitions which should be delivered within the curriculum and ways to engage students to build individual career plans, and to be equipped for “lifelong learning and an enduring capacity to manage change” (p. 4). However, as outlined earlier, the mandate for careers education in New Zealand, like in California, is vague, and open to multiple interpretations, there is a lack of accompanying resources and many schools view it as an unfunded mandate and therefore do not implement it (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Lynes, 2001).

De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) suggest “workers in the new economy may have up to fifty years to realize one or more careers which is a significantly longer work life than in the past... and unclear whether students are aware of and understand the possible changes in the nature of employment and the need to be flexible” (p. 2). It is therefore essential for this type of information to be shared with students as part of their career education programme but the literature suggests more focus is given to subject selection and tertiary options (Lynes, 2001; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).
The handbook suggests that careers education should be schoolwide, part of pastoral care and delivered by all teaching staff, Deans, and deputy principals across the school and refers to the *Creating Pathways and Building Lives and Designing Careers* (CPaBL) project which took place in one hundred secondary schools nationwide during 2007 and 2008 to help up-skill educators to provide effective careers advice to students. One quote used in the handbook asserts “Careers thinking is integrated into everything we do, particularly in pastoral care and also in the classroom. There’s complete staff buy-in” (Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 23). This school was part of the CPaBL project but most secondary schools were not given the opportunity to take part and no other training or support has been offered to these schools. De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) suggest school districts should “provide professional development training for teachers and counselors, in co-ordination with local workforce investment bodies...and allow them to participate in a two-week summer or off-session internship with business or industry and grant them continuing education credits for maintaining their professional credentials” (p. 8).

The handbook also outlines the importance of work experience and offering students the opportunity to experience a range of occupations they are interested in and endorses programmes like Gateway (a structured work experience programme for select senior students) and Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) which allows certain students to experience short taster placements within a tertiary environment within their career field of interest in junior school. The handbook does not, however, make suggestions on how these programmes should be managed, which students should participate and who should create these industry partnerships. Boyd and McDowall (2004) completed a New Zealand study which showed that some students wanted more work experience either related to their interests, or in a range of different areas, more guidance earlier on in their schooling and
more opportunities to develop career self-management skills to help with the transition from school. Overseas there is a strong movement towards offering a relevant work placement to all secondary level students linked to their career interests to help keep students on track academically, attending school and linking core subjects to real life jobs (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Horne, 2010; Southern Regional Education Board, 2009)).

The handbook also provides a model which shows the influences on career decisions for students, as adapted from a diagram produced by an Australian writer on careers education, and this covers a number of key theoretical and research-produced examples which educators should consider as part of any careers education programme (Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008). However, there is very little context and few resources provided in the handbook for delivering this information.

A recent report in the United States suggests that states might consider facilitating the use of a growing repository of open education careers resources – online open source instructional materials that can be modified and customised by end users and multi-state collaboration to build web portals, commission the creation of helpful materials and online professional development aligned to common college and career-ready standards (Hassel, 2009). De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) concur by suggesting the state could establish a central clearinghouse for information using the state portal linked to the California Career Resource Network. Perhaps the Ministry of Education could facilitate something similar for New Zealand secondary schools, to ensure a consistent and high quality careers programme in all schools across the country.
This study will examine what is currently being delivered in secondary schools, to whom and in what context, to consider the effectiveness of the careers education being received by students and the consistency of delivery across schools in New Zealand.

In conclusion, the literature highlights a number of gaps and issues which this research will examine. The first is related to the slow development of careers education in New Zealand and the low status given to this area of the curriculum and how this impacts on students and the role of Careers Advisors today. There is very little literature available in the New Zealand context to draw on and overseas literature suggests careers education is also given low priority but challenges are now being voiced to change this to ensure students are ready for the 21st century work environment.

The second gap is the lack of consultation by policymakers with students as a stakeholder group when developing policy and the careers curriculum and handbook guidelines which brings into question the relevancy of the handbook material for students today. This seems to be a common issue overseas as well.

The third gap identified in the literature is related to student consultation by schools and actually asking students what they think about issues relating to their education by giving them a voice.

The fourth issue identified in the literature relates to working with students as individuals and placing them in the centre of their learning and allowing them to construct their own individual career plans, to help them understand their individual frames of reference and influences, to create buy-in and ownership of the process.
The fifth area of interest is in the role of Careers Advisors and the delivery of the curriculum, whether consistent standards are maintained across schools, what is delivered and by whom, whether they have professional qualifications and the implications of this in terms of student outcomes.

The final theme relates to the Ministry of Education handbook which sets out the guidelines for careers education and whether schools actually deliver these guidelines, and whether students and Careers Advisors believe the guidelines are current and relevant, to ensure students are well equipped to make lifelong career decisions.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this study. It considers the use of qualitative methodology to investigate the processes and influences involved in students’ career decision making at secondary school and then, reflectively two years post-secondary school. Then the relevance of current careers education and guidance which students receive within the secondary school sector will be examined.

Finally the role of Careers Advisors will be investigated and the theory and delivery of careers education as prescribed in the Ministry of Education handbook, and including the professional qualifications held. The selection of schools, participants and sample groups is outlined, the research methods explained, sampling and data analysis discussed and explained, all with reference to the literature base. The concepts of triangulation, reliability, validity and ethics are also outlined.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

After considering the paradigms or ways of looking at the world, and applying a range of ontological and epistemological assumptions to a research problem, a qualitative study method was chosen (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). This is because qualitative (constructivist, interpretive, advocacy) approaches are about studying experiences within a particular environmental context and the researcher and subjects create multiple, rich and deep
participant meanings, social, political and historical influences are considered, the research can be collaborative, and issues of empowerment, social justice and resulting change can all be part of the research process (Creswell, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Qualitative research is appropriate when “events and individuals are unique and reality is multi-layered and complex” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 20) as is the situation with schools, students and Career Advisors in this study. An appropriate methodology must produce data that is of suitable depth to allow for an analysis of issues related to careers education. This has been referred to as ‘bricoleur’ as it is a pieced together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation as information and themes emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This study examines different voices and perspectives to help create meaning, whilst considering the historical and political contexts surrounding careers education and guidance and student voice as a legitimate research tool (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It highlights the importance of critical reflection as a way of minimising personal bias and the tendency to cloud the viewpoint of subjects in an area of study the researcher is passionate about (Lincoln & Guba, 2005).

As part of the interview and questionnaire process, students and Careers Advisors had the opportunity to share their individual perspectives within their own environments to create a co-constructed reality where individuals were encouraged to reveal what they thought on a variety of research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). The methodology was therefore hermeneutical (interpretive) or dialectical and the inquirer posture was that of “facilitator of multivoice reconstruction” within a qualitative context (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 196). This
allowed for a number of different perspectives to be gathered by the researcher using multiple methods to create triangulation involving the four sample groups; Year 13 students still at school in a focus group and then semi-structured interviews, students two years post-school using semi-structured interviews and Careers Advisors using a questionnaire.

The study therefore focussed on the effectiveness of careers education in the secondary school environment, what students received, where they saw gaps, whether they were consulted about what they needed, and whether they felt empowered and able to make effective career decisions from what they received at school. This was achieved firstly using a focus group of seven Year 13 students from one school to help identify key themes and issues and to ensure the research questions were appropriate and understood by the students. The type of language used in framing questions for interviews was piloted by the focus group students to ensure they understood the meaning and were not restricted, alienated or patronised in the process of student consultation (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Gunter & Thomson, 2007). Three students from that group then had individual interviews and two students were also interviewed from one other school in the Auckland region to gain a deeper insight into the way students viewed careers education in their school. This sample group was restricted in numbers due to the difficulty of gaining permission from principals to interview Year 13 students.

The study then examined the thoughts and perceptions of students who left school two years previously to allow for some reflective comparison and to see whether those students felt they had made the right career decision based on the advice they received at school and to ask if there was anything they would have liked that was not offered. This was achieved via six individual interviews. Finally a questionnaire was sent to eight Careers Advisors from around
New Zealand to get their perspectives on what they thought the processes and influences for career making decisions were with students in their school, to allow for a comparison with what the students shared and to create triangulation which will be explained further in the reliability and validity section in this chapter.

The planned sample size of eight for each of the three groups took into consideration the time and monetary constraints faced with part-time study (Bryman, 2008; Keeves, 1997). The sample size was large enough to provide meaningful data, while providing opportunities to conduct in depth qualitative analysis. By spreading the participants over several schools it was hoped there would be enough meaningful data generated for comparative purposes. Unfortunately it was difficult to get eight participants in each sample and some are less, as explained above.

**Selection of secondary schools**

Schools were selected by drawing on contacts in the profession and then by virtue of proximity to work, as long travel distances were not feasible due to the time constraints and costs involved. The Careers Advisors’ questionnaire was electronic so this allowed for a wider geographic spread around New Zealand, but the Year 13 students involved in the study were all from secondary schools in the greater Auckland area. The post-school students originated from a number of different secondary schools around New Zealand.

The samples were drawn from a mixture of private, state and integrated secondary schools with a range of decile (socio-economic) ratings as shown in table 3.1 below:
Table 3.1: Profile of the secondary schools involved in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Decile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>State x1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 13 semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>State x 2</td>
<td>3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Advisors’ questionnaires</td>
<td>State x 6</td>
<td>3, 5, 5, 5, 5, 10, 5,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private x 2</td>
<td>5,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-school semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>State x 3</td>
<td>3,4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private x 2</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Integrated x 1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sampling**

Secondary school principals were contacted by email to seek permission for the senior Careers Advisor and Year 13 students to participate, and then an email letter followed to the Careers Advisor explaining the research and with a copy of the electronic questionnaire to be emailed back to the researcher for coding and collation. The sample group comprised secondary schools from around New Zealand and incorporated state and private schools, town and city schools, and Careers Advisors of differing experience and qualifications and different work structures as shown in the table below:
Table 3.2: A summary of the Careers Advisors’ demographic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time in role</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Length of time in current school. Town or city school</th>
<th>Percentage of hours working as Careers Advisor and others in dept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – 10 yrs</td>
<td>Masters in Counselling - final year</td>
<td>4 years Medium city school</td>
<td>75% Gateway and Star Coordinator during term time, admin assistant 20 hours/week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – 20 yrs</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>13 years Large city school</td>
<td>100% Another CA 4 days a week, one full-time ancillary and one full-time Gateway ancillary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – 25 yrs</td>
<td>Postgrad cert in counselling</td>
<td>2.5 yrs Small city school</td>
<td>75% 1-2 hrs admin support/week, 4 other staff involved in delivering careers education at yrs 10 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – 20 yrs</td>
<td>Master of Education, Postgrad dip in counselling</td>
<td>24 yrs Small city school</td>
<td>75% On own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – 21 yrs</td>
<td>Cert in Career Development</td>
<td>8 yrs Large city school</td>
<td>75% Gateway Co-ordinator – 0.5, administrator – 10 hours /week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F – 5 yrs</td>
<td>¾ papers in Cert in Career Development, Assessor for SDS</td>
<td>7 years, including 1 part-time Small town school</td>
<td>100% Administrator full-time, Gateway Co-ordinator – 20 hrs/week, STAR Co-ordinator – 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G – 10 yrs</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>25 yrs Large city school</td>
<td>100% Gateway Co-ordinator – 20 hrs/week, Receptionist/administrator – 18 hrs/week, receptionist – 20 hrs/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H – 24 yrs</td>
<td>Master’s in Careers Development</td>
<td>3 yrs Medium city school</td>
<td>100% Administrator – 20 hrs/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The focus group sample consisted of seven students from one secondary school as one was ill on the day and the participants were invited by the Careers Advisor to fit the year level and age requirements of the study, called purposive sampling (Bryman, 2008). The researcher planned to work only with students who were aged 18 or older, to make the consent process more manageable (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Bryman, 2008; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). However, as most students were not yet 18 and the research took place during school hours, parental consent was still required.

The semi-structured Year 13 interview sample group consisted of three students who volunteered from the initial focus group and two students from one other secondary school who were approached by their Careers Advisor to participate if they wished to. The study initially was planned using eight students from a wider sample of schools but gaining access to students proved problematic.

The Careers Advisor where the focus group was conducted agreed to contact a number of students who had left school two years previously and one volunteered to have an interview, so contact details were passed on to the researcher. That student then passed on the name of a friend of the same age group who they thought might be interested in participating, and so on, using the snowball method, and the researcher contacted six students who agreed to participate in individual interviews using this method (Bryman, 2008). Participant information is provided in table 3.3 below:
Table 3.3: Post school participant demographic data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>School type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Private 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>State 3, Private 1, Integrated 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Current destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>University 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>University 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESEARCH METHODS

Three research tools were utilised to conduct the research in this study to reflect the qualitative nature of the research and to ensure triangulation – a questionnaire for Careers Advisors, a focus group for Year 13 students and individual semi-structured interviews for Year 13 students and those two years post-school. This ensured many perspectives were considered and allowed the voice of students to be heard, as a number of the questions allowed the students to express their opinions and offer suggestions for improvement within careers education, thus facilitating social democracy (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Keeves, 1997).

1. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are useful for collecting data over a large geographical area and to study particular groups to facilitate comparison of the responses (Bell, 2007; Hinds, 2000). Electronic questionnaires are time and cost effective and can elicit a strong response rate.
A pilot was run first with a colleague who was a past Careers Advisor to ensure the questionnaire provided rich and useful data and to check that each question was clear and easy to follow. Bell (2007) asserts that “it is only when a group similar to your main population completes your questionnaire and provides feedback that you know for sure that all is well” (p. 232). Feedback from the pilot allowed for adjustment of the table in question 7 to gain more meaningful data and also to ask for extra demographic information which added to the richness of the data gathered.

An electronic questionnaire was then emailed to each Careers Advisor, along with a letter which explained the nature of the study and that the responses would be coded and the participant and school kept confidential. (See appendix 1). The questions consisted firstly of basic demographic information which related to years in the job, qualifications, percentage of time allocated to careers advisory work versus teaching and number of people in the department. Then it moved on to whether the careers information being provided was sufficient for students to make an informed decision in their opinion, what additional information and experience they would like to provide, and what or whom they think influences students career making decisions. Finally it explored more general career theory and concepts, asked about the usefulness of the Ministry of Education handbook *Career Education and Guidelines in New Zealand Schools* (2008) and explored student voice within the area of careers education. The questions were mostly open-ended as the researcher wanted to explore as deeply as possible the participants’ views on each topic (Bryman, 2008). The results allowed for comparison across the sector and, with the student and post-student responses, created triangulation and depth within the data.
2. Focus group interview

A focus group interview is used to gain information relating to how people think, to explain perceptions of an event, idea or experience, and when there is a desire to understand a human experience in greater detail and with many perspectives explored within a group setting (Hinds, 2000). Focus group interviews are based on the principles of self-disclosure, grounded in a comfortable environment, using a particular type of questioning within some established focus group rules (Hinds, 2000). The person recording the interactions should be aware of both verbal and non-verbal expression, and take written notes as well as electronic recordings if possible (Hinds, 2000). Any apparent bias during the interview needs to be addressed by the interviewer, and the subjects invited to reflect on or summarise what has been discussed and given the opportunity to view their contribution once the results are written up. The findings should be transcribed and collated as soon as possible after the focus interview to enhance accuracy (Hinds, 2000).

Permission was sought from a school principal to conduct a focus group with eight Year 13 students who were aged 18 years or over. The principal then asked the Careers Advisor to arrange for volunteer Year 13 students who were aged 18 with the view that the first eight to get their consent forms back would be invited to join a focus group. However as it was early in the school year there were very few students who had turned 18, but all turned 18 during the research timeframe so it was deemed acceptable to continue the study using a mixture of student ages, but all from Year 13. A carefully constructed set of questions was written and piloted with the focus group to ensure they could understand the language and concepts being asked (Fielding, 2000). (See appendix 2).
The focus group was held at the school in a comfortable room away from the student areas. The recording equipment was tested, and the participants were informed about the purpose of the study both in writing before the interview as part of the consent process and again at the start of the interview. Steps were taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects using coding (Hinds, 2000). Awareness of personal bias and not having leading questions during the focus group, plus writing up the findings as soon as possible after the interview ensured accuracy (Hinds, 2000). The focus group was taped and brief notes were made throughout the hour.

3. Semi-structured interviews – Year 13 students

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted using a set of questions as a guide. (See appendix 3). This allowed for flexibility with the order of questions and for a combination of open and closed questions which focussed on a particular theme, plus further exploration of relevant points raised during the interviews and focus group (Hinds, 2000). Interviews are used when in-depth information is required (Hinds, 2000).

The questions were piloted with the focus group to ensure the appropriate results were achievable and the language understandable for the student sample (Hinds, 2000). The interviews were held at the school in a comfortable room away from the student areas. The recording equipment was tested, and the interviewee was informed about the purpose of the study both in writing before the interview as part of the consent process and again at the start of the interview. The interviews took a maximum of one hour each. Steps were taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subject using coding and to arrange for the interviewee to be given the opportunity to check the transcript after it was written up (Hinds, 2000). Awareness of personal bias and not having leading questions during the interview,
plus writing up the findings as soon as possible after the interview ensured accuracy (Hinds, 2000).

4. Semi-structured interviews – Post-school students

A carefully prepared interview guide sheet was used, along with an interview check list to ensure each participant was treated the same and that all ethics requirements were carried out in a timely manner. (See appendix 4). The interviews were conducted in a location that was convenient for the participant but also where the space was quiet and private. The recording equipment was tested, and the interviewee was informed about the purpose of the study both in writing before the interview as part of the consent process and again at the start of the interview. The interviews took a maximum of one hour each. Steps were taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subject using coding, and to arrange for the interviewee to be given the opportunity to check the transcript after it was written up (Hinds, 2000). Awareness of personal bias and not having leading questions during the interview, plus writing up the findings as soon as possible after the interview ensured accuracy (Hinds, 2000).

DATA ANALYSIS

After the questionnaires were completed, the quantitative demographic information was entered into a table and each response was coded to ensure anonymity. The qualitative data was then typed up, colour coded and pooled under each question to allow for comparison and emerging themes to surface. These were then coded and reassembled thematically to allow for comparison with the other sample groups in the study. The research questions which were informed by the initial literature review also guided the overall process. Relevant quotes were highlighted and added to the themed headings.
The focus group responses were then transcribed and coded. The main issues and themes around each question were then colour coded, pooled and placed under the same headings as the Careers Advisors’ responses to allow for further comparison. Using inductive analysis the common themes in the data led to the creation of categories and concepts which then helped to inform the later individual interview questions, in combination with the earlier literature review (Bryman, 2008; Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006).

The interviews were then transcribed and thematically coded using themes identified in the literature, from the Careers Advisors’ questionnaire and from the focus group. Relevant quotes were highlighted and added to the themed headings. The qualitative data gathered from the four sample groups provided a multiple, rich and deep participant data pool which reflected different viewpoints and created triangulation (Creswell, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

**RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

The rigour and quality of the research and the validity and reliability of the data being collected are of prime importance in research. Researchers stress the importance of reliability and replication in research which is measured by the consistency of the results when repeated at a different time, in a different place and with a different researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Keeves, 1997). In undertaking this research with a limited number of secondary schools and a relatively small sample group, it is acknowledged that the results may not be fully replicated if another researcher were to do a similar study using the same research tools. However, the literature review shows that similar issues have been raised around the world and that this research is in line with other current research findings within the field of careers education and student voice. This research
generals the findings to the population being studied and makes recommendations to improve the delivery of careers education within the New Zealand context. This is sometimes referred to as external reliability and it is recognised that in qualitative research it is not possible to “freeze a social setting and the circumstances of an initial study to make it replicable” in the usual sense of the term (Bryman, 2008, p. 376).

Interpretive qualitative researchers are concerned with validity and whether, for example, the questions in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews truly measure the concepts being researched, and that the individuals’ responses are accurately reflected to ensure worthwhile research findings (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Keeves, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Respondent validation or member checking is one way for a researcher to check validity particularly with semi-structured interviews where it is possible to misinterpret what the participant stated (Bryman, 2008). The researcher offered each interviewee the opportunity to read over their transcripts to ensure they were accurate before moving on to the data analysis stage. One of the risks when conducting interviews is personal bias (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). The researcher was very mindful of this when constructing the questions and interview guide sheet and did everything possible to minimise this threat during the interview process by not using leading questions.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that qualitative research must reflect validity and that qualitative data must be honest, show depth, richness and scope, all of which depends on the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one research method or source of data to ensure the cross-checking of data, sometimes referred to as ‘internal validity’ (Bryman, 2008). The researcher employed three different methods and four
different sample groups to ensure methodological triangulation occurred and to allow for a cross-checking of the data. Similar questions were asked to gain different perspectives from a wide range of participants, including those in a Year 13 student focus group, semi-structured interviews of Year 13 students and those two years post-school to allow for a retrospective viewpoint, and the views of Careers Advisors working in secondary schools to provide a broad set of data. Bush (2007) agreed, stating that “triangulation means comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information...It is essentially a means of cross-checking data to establish its validity” (p. 100).

Thus a range of triangulation methods were utilised for this research. Data source triangulation was used to ensure the transcribed interviews were accurate and provided a baseline of data from different participants to allow for comparison of results from within the sample group and across all the other sample groups. The questionnaire also provided an opportunity to compare responses across the sample and with the other participant groups. This allowed for the common ideas and themes to emerge which verified the results of the study by demonstrating many similar participant stories. Methodological triangulation was achieved by utilising three methods: (1) conducting a focus group, (2) interviews, and (3) a questionnaire, to allow for comparison of data. Finally, the research methods and processes were closely scrutinised by my supervisors, with regular communication during all stages of this research and regular submissions of sections of work for comment and feedback.

Bryman (2008) also refers to external validity which is the degree to which findings can be generalised across social settings. He suggests this is more difficult with qualitative research due to the small samples employed but the researcher is confident that the data is deep and that meaningful recommendations can be made from the data collected.
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research project complied with the Unitec (UREC) requirements to undertake a Masters Degree thesis and the researcher also sought regular guidance from the academic supervisor. Letters outlining the purpose and scope of the research were sent firstly to school principals and then the selected Careers Advisors and students. (See appendix section for each sample group’s consent form and information letter; appendix 5 contains the ethics approval letter and principal’s consent letter). Written consent was obtained from the school and then from parents or guardians of school-aged participants (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Bryman, 2008; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003).

All research subjects were volunteers and gave their written consent after they had been carefully briefed on the project, told what was expected of them, what the results would be used for, and their rights to withdraw from the study until the interview process, at which time the data would remain with the researcher but they could view their transcript before the results were written up (Bryman, 2008; Wilkinson, 2001). Participants had the opportunity to seek clarification of issues before agreeing to sign the consent form and again at the start of the focus group and interviews.

The researcher ensured there was no harm to participants by maintaining confidentiality, ensuring interviews did not last longer than one hour, respecting any cultural differences, and having clear and relevant questions prepared. Interviews were conducted at a time and place nominated by the Careers Advisor, in discussion with the student, to ensure they felt safe and in a familiar space. There were no conflicts of interest as the researcher no longer works in the secondary school sector.
While there were no specific cultural aspects to this study there were students from different cultures, so having an awareness of their cultural capital and what is appropriate to their beliefs and customs was important, as set out in the UREC guidelines (Bishop, 2005; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003; Kane & Maw, 2005).

Lastly, consideration was given to confidentiality and how anonymity would be maintained, the protection of individual data that was gathered, and control over who would have access to the research findings (Bryman, 2008). The researcher has ensured all data was treated with respect and confidentiality. Questionnaires, focus group transcripts, interview transcripts, printouts and all analysis of data are kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home. Electronic copies and audio will be kept as password-protected files on a CD and also held in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home. All data will be held for five years from the completion of the study.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed and critiqued the justification of employing a qualitative approach for this research topic, it has outlined the methodological framework for the study, the research process, the methods used in the study, how the data was analysed and the verification processes involved. The next chapter presents the data findings and analysis of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected during the focus group interview, the semi-structured interviews with students in Year 13 and two years post-school, and the questionnaire given to the Careers Advisors in this study. The first section explores the processes and influences students and Careers Advisors identify as affecting career decision making. The second section examines the relevance of current careers education and guidance which students receive within the secondary school sector, and the third section looks at the role of Careers Advisors and the theory and delivery of careers education as prescribed in the Ministry of Education handbook, and including their professional qualifications.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As discussed in the previous chapter the sample groups comprised eight Careers Advisors from secondary schools around New Zealand, seven Year 13 students from one secondary school in Auckland for the focus group, five Year 13 students from two Auckland schools and six students who were two years post-school from schools around New Zealand for the semi-structured interviews. The sample groups came from twelve state schools, two private schools and one state-integrated school, as shown in table 3.1 in the previous chapter.

The Careers Advisors’ sample comprised two with completed postgraduate career development qualifications and one nearing completion, three with counselling qualifications,
one with social work qualifications and one with no postgraduate qualifications. All of the post-school students were attending The University of Auckland full-time.

THE PROCESSES AND INFLUENCES INVOLVED IN STUDENTS’ CAREER DECISION MAKING

Each sample group was asked who or what they thought most influenced career making decisions. Parental and family influence was considered very strong by all participants (all 7 in the focus group, all 5 in the Year 13 group, all 6 in the post-school group and 7 of the 8 Careers Advisors, as one did not complete the ranking table). One student from the Year 13 sample out of all 18 students stated that the Careers Advisor had some influence, whereas all 7 of the Careers Advisors believed they had an influence. All 18 students felt the Dean had no influence but all the Careers Advisors agreed that they did have an influence.

Form and classroom teachers had some influence, particularly around subject selection, with 6 out of 7 from the focus group agreeing, 3 out of 5 from the Year 13 group, 5 out of 6 from the post-school group and all seven Careers Advisors agreeing. Friends, particularly family friends, had some influence with 4 out of 7 agreeing from the focus group, 2 out of 5 from the Year 13 group, 2 out of 6 from the post-school group and all seven Careers Advisors. Sports coaches had little influence with only one student from the post-school sample agreeing, whereas all the Careers Advisors agreed, and church and religious beliefs had some influence with two students from each sample agreeing, compared to 6 out of the 7 Careers Advisors agreeing. Finally the media had some influence with 1 out of 7 from the focus group agreeing, 3 out of 5 from the Year 13 sample agreeing, none from the post-school group agreeing and 6 out of the 7 Careers Advisors supporting this. The participants from each group also came up with a range of other influences such as family circumstances, socio-
economic factors, the decile rating of their school, life experiences, being a participant in Gateway, work experience opportunities, assembly speakers, liaison staff visits from tertiary institutes and so on. The results are shown in the bar charts below with accompanying quotes from each group:

![Focus Group Sample](image)

Fig. 4.1: Influences on career decision making from the focus group

The greatest influencers were parents, then form and classroom teachers, friends and family friends, then Careers Advisors, church, followed by media. Deans and sports coaches were deemed to have no influence. The focus group also offered a list of other influences including life experience, upbringing, where you live in Auckland, the school doctor, work experience,
former students speaking at assembly, liaison people visiting from universities, open days at tertiary providers, Gateway, Work Choice Day, Police Youth Programme, income at end of study, scholarships, and Student for a Day. The following quotes highlight the main issues raised by the focus group sample, showing that Careers Advisors help with information on grades linked to tertiary entry and scholarships, and that peers and socio-economic area can affect achievement at school:

*The Careers Advisor gives us information and what sort of marks to achieve and scholarships.* FG4

*I re-enrolled myself back into school and moved away from South Auckland and friends who were bad influences.* FG7

![Main influences of career decision making](image)

*Fig. 4.2: Influences on career decision making from the Year 13 group*
The Year 13 sample also rated parents and family members as having the greatest influence, then form and classroom teachers, media and Careers Advisors all having equal influence, followed by friends and family friends and church influence, then the Dean and finally sports coaches who had no influence on this group. The other influences on career decision making are the same as the previous list from the focus group.

The quotes demonstrate some of the key points raised by the Year 13 sample group, with only one student claiming the Dean was of any help, three suggesting their form or classroom teachers helped them and three believing the media influenced their career decision making:

*My Dean saw something wrong in my subjects for nursing and changed my timetable.* Y3

*My science teacher was my form teacher and always pushing me to work hard, focus, helped with subjects and career choices.* Y1

*I want to experience it – Grey’s Anatomy and ER and what you see.* Y1
The post-school sample also gave parents and family influence the highest rating, followed by form and classroom teachers, then Careers Advisors, with friends and family friends tied with church influence, then sports coaches and lastly the dean with no influence on career making decisions. Other influences included the university calendar and prospectus information, open days, liaison visits from universities, Year 13 Motivation Day, university websites, careers expos, speakers at school, the school you attended and your upbringing.

The following quotes highlight several important aspects of career decision making including the influence of parents, how peer pressure can lead to a lack of career planning and that religious beliefs can influence decision making.

Dad stressed the importance of university or move out of home. PSE
Peer pressure not to be a nerd and plan my future as this was not cool. PSC

My spiritual life and what God wanted me to do. PSC

Fig. 4.4: Influences on career decision making from the Careers Advisors group

One of the eight Careers Advisors did not complete the ranking table as they felt it was different for every student. The rest of the sample agreed that parental and family influence was strong, as was that of Careers Advisors, Deans, form and classroom teachers, friends and family friends, and sports coaches who all ranked the same, with church and media influence close behind and all much stronger than any of the student samples. One Careers Advisor also suggested that Gateway, part-time work and industry representatives had some influence on students today and the quotes below reflect these findings, as does the discussion which follows in the next chapter:
I find parents are the ones who do not understand the information and make decisions based on their limited knowledge, hearsay and their own experiences. (CAD)

Careers information on its own is only ever going to be a tool in the decision making process. (CAH)

Gateway and increasing participation in part-time work mean employers and industry representatives are having a growing influence on career choices that students make. (CAA)

THE RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR

This section examines the relevance of careers education and guidance as viewed by the students who received it and then the Careers Advisors who deliver careers education and guidance within secondary schools. A number of areas were identified by the student sample groups as being extremely useful to aid well-informed career decisions, and these are summarised below.

Useful guidance and support required for making informed career decisions

Each sample group was asked what they would have found helpful when they were trying to make their career decisions. The common themes were the opportunity to participate in work experience relevant to their career interests, visits to expos, tertiary campus programmes and other course providers, visits by university liaison staff, past students speaking at assemblies
and motivational speakers and more information provided on the types of careers available.

The results are shown below:

A) Work experience

Focus Group – All seven students agreed that work experience within their career field(s) of interest would help them to make more informed career decisions and that the school should assist with this and the government should fund it. They suggested that everyone in senior school should be able to participate in some form of Gateway, where students spend one day a week in a possible career field, even if it was just for one day. This would allow them to talk to people working in their career interest in a normal work setting, to work shadow, to perform basic tasks and to experience first-hand what it is like to work in this occupation. One participant was currently involved with a Gateway programme as part of her schooling and she summed it up:

> Work experience through Gateway allowed me to try out a bank teller’s role and this was helpful as now I know I want to do this as a career. (FG6)

And another added:

> I would like to meet a cardiac surgeon in work experience and be able to hear their experiences and ask if they enjoy their job or not. (FG7)

Year 13 students – Four out of five suggested work experience, Gateway for all students in year 13, and having hands on experience within their career field of interest would have been helpful. They also suggested Work Choice Day should be extended to Year 13 as well as
Year 12 where it currently occurs and that being able to visit two work places of interest during that day was very helpful as it gave them an insight into a real work environment. One student reported:

I felt I needed hands-on experience and gained most of it outside of school when I overheard the school receptionist talking about her son who is a police officer and asked if I could meet him. I went on a scoping trip with him and enjoyed it and found out about the physical requirements and then joined a gym; also that I needed a restricted drivers license, swimming requirements for the entry test, the academic requirements, the psychometric tests and where to find the practice ones on-line and the interview process so I could prepare. (Y2)

Post-school students - Five out of six students would have liked a school-run work experience day or the opportunity to talk to someone in their field of interest. One stated that Gateway was not seen as an academic subject so they did not get this opportunity but it would have helped and others mentioned Gateway as a way of gaining work experience but none of the interviewees had participated in this programme. One student talked about the need for an interactive placement but she would have had to organise it herself and found it difficult to get access to a hospital and gave up. Another organised some volunteer work in her field of interest but thought the school should have done this for her. One student suggested:

I would have liked a more hands-on approach; I needed a day with a professional to get a taste of it. (PSC)
Another stated:

_I had an interest in culture and languages so spoke to a person at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and this led to an increasing interest in law, otherwise I might just have studied languages._ (PSB)

**Careers Advisors** – Three of the eight Careers Advisors agreed that work experience is something they would like to offer if time and funds allowed. They would also provide more Gateway opportunities for students and time out in the community researching their options. One also suggested they would like to offer more industry-based standards in conjunction with the community and school. One Careers Advisor states:

_I would offer more time out in the community researching their options - ie talking to people in their occupations._ (CAC)

The importance of work experience will be discussed in the following chapter.

**B) Visits to expos, tertiary campus programmes, other course providers**

**Focus group** – All seven students agreed that visits to career expos; tertiary open days; Student for a Day; and other programmes like the Futures Programme for girls interested in science, were helpful as part of their decision making process. They would all have liked more opportunities to do this, particularly in junior school when they had to make subject choices for Year 11 without really understanding how those choices linked to future careers and entry requirements to tertiary study. Student (FG5) suggests:
We were not given information on what was out there and need it in junior school to ensure good grades and a better understanding of the importance of subjects and working hard.

**Year 13 students** – All five students suggested that visits to places of interest for future study and career expos where they could look at a large range of possible career options was important but only two had been offered this opportunity by the school. The following students sum this up:

*I needed to know what the other options were out there, the different career choices within the medical field, and how to get into nursing.* (Y1)

*I wanted a taste of Police College, to visit and see what it was like.* (Y2)

*Student for a Day at AUT or University of Auckland would have helped.* (Y3)

**Post-school students** – All six participants thought careers expos and visits to tertiary were helpful in the career making process. Four had attended careers expos in some form and the other two would have liked this opportunity. Two students had attended the University of Auckland Courses and Careers Day and found this useful. However all six students stressed that this did not go far enough in terms of understanding degree choices, majors, minors, how the university calendar worked, and how to enrol. They all suggested that a day spent on campus and actually sitting in on lectures, being able to talk to current students and lecturers and being able to get more in-depth information in their fields of interest would have been extremely helpful. The following illustrates the issues they raised:
I was not very informed about university life, courses, majors, minors, etc and now can't do postgraduate studies in classics as I took the wrong papers. (PSE)

At 17 it’s hard to make a choice for the rest of your life so I went with the subjects I enjoyed but at university that can change a bit as so much more out there to choose from. (PSC)

In year 10 I was selected to attend a Pasifika Day at Victoria University which really helped me; if all year 9 and 10 Pasifika students were exposed to a university campus and could speak to real students it would help focus young people especially from low decile schools which are looked down on; knowing about university entrance and also polytechs as not everyone is a genius, we are all different. (PSA)

**Careers Advisors** – Four of the eight would like to offer students more opportunities to participate in offsite programmes and believe these add value to students’ career decision making choices. Most provide a school-based careers expo and limited numbers can attend programmes for Maori and Pasifika students, STAR taster courses, and other campus based experiences for very select students. The following remarks typify their responses:

*I would like to offer more open days and Try it for Day experiences and more school expos for parents to attend but these take time to administrate and there is only one of me and half an administrator.* (CAH)
We provide expo visits, tertiary tasters, STAR courses, seminar programmes, KATTI, FONO, STEAM, as part of a comprehensive careers programme. (CAB)

These findings will be discussed further in the following chapters, particularly the need to start visits to tertiary institutes in junior school and the usefulness of such visits for all secondary school students.

C) Visits by university liaison staff, past students, motivational speakers

Focus group – All seven students agreed that speakers at school assemblies and visits from university liaison staff were helpful when trying to make informed career decisions. Three spoke about past students addressing them at school assemblies and how this helped to motivate them and to believe that they, too, could make it to university. They also talked about the useful information they received from the liaison staff from universities, StudyLink regarding student loans, subjects that link to tertiary study options, entry requirements, available scholarships, degree structures and so on. The following sums up their thoughts:

Having former students who have achieved at a high level, for example a speaker in law recently at assembly has helped to inspire me to do well at school and beyond. (FG1, 3, 5)

People from university have helped me to focus on the entry requirements and subjects I need for nursing. (FG4)
**Year 13 students** – Three students enjoyed having successful past students speak at assemblies and found this motivational. Two found the visits from the university liaison people helpful. One sums it up as:

*The fact that we had information on my career choice from different universities and institutes so I was able to compare them and see which would be best for me was helpful.* (Y4)

**Post-school students** – All six agreed that they needed more help selecting universities, degree structures, majors, minors, postgraduate options, what it was like to study at university, more about university administration, papers, weighting of exams, how pre-requisites work and so on. They also concurred that their Careers Advisors were not that helpful, parents generally didn’t know either and the liaison visits were rushed, very generalised and with nominal time for questions at the end of the presentation. One suggested in hindsight that she should have attended the Courses and Careers Day at the university but at the time she was not in the mindset to do so and only enrolled a fortnight before university commenced.

Another said that in hindsight she wished she had explored the postgraduate requirements from the beginning but she did not know this until it was too late and she found she had chosen the wrong subjects to continue in her preferred field of interest. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to have assembly speakers who were past university and actually working in real jobs, rather than just university people talking about university and degrees. A couple of quotes demonstrate the views shared by this sample group:
I should have gone to Wellington to speak to people in my career field of interest but didn’t get this until I came to university. (PSA)

I needed to know what university was like, I thought it was really scary but it’s fun, there’s freedom to choose subjects; postgraduate study knowledge would have been helpful, to, in hindsight. (PSE)

Careers Advisors – All eight provide students with access to tertiary liaison staff, information on tertiary institutes, appropriate websites to obtain information and prospectuses, and assembly speakers. However, most agree that information is only one component of the decision making process and that students must be motivated to want to seek and receive the information and act on it. One Careers Advisor states:

Information is only one component of the decision making process; there is probably sufficient information available via the internet but issues of interpretation and motivation to persevere in the research process affect the utilisation of information. (CAC)

The findings suggest visits from different tertiary and industry groups are important as part of the career making process and this will be explored further in chapter five.

D) More information on types of careers available

Focus Group – Six out of the seven wanted to have more information on the types of careers available, to see DVDs and videos and have interactive technology available to email companies with enquiries, go on to websites, see people at work in different fields, hear about
different careers during assembly, in class and by visiting workplaces. They all seemed to have an idea of a particular career but no understanding of the other possible choices within their field of interest, so felt they may not be choosing the best option but they did not know what the other options were. The student who was most confident with her choice was the only one who had participated in Gateway and had actually worked in her field of interest.

The following quotes demonstrate their thoughts:

*My work experience through Gateway as a bank teller was helpful as I know I want to do this now for a career.* (FG6)

*I would have liked to know what other careers are out there in the medical field.* (FG2)

*Broadening my mind on what else is out there; not given careers information of what is out there and need it in junior school.* (FG5)

*When younger there was a TV programme which profiled different occupations each week which was very helpful; need more overview of what is out there, videos of occupations and people in careers, more resources and options available, subjects linked to careers.* (FG7)

Four of the students suggested that the school had not been very helpful and that they had received more information from their family circle and outside influences. Student (FG3) summed up when she stated:

*I don’t think school has really provided me with useful information; I had more from my older siblings currently studying in the medical field and other family members.*

**Year 13 students** – All agreed that they had received some form of careers education and guidance during school but this was heavily weighted towards subject selection and what
they were good at, academic results and entrance requirements for tertiary, rather than what career options were available, their skills and interests, family circumstances, beliefs, and values which all affected their career making decisions. Two students had completed Career Quest which is a computer programme designed to match skills, interests and subjects to possible careers within those areas which they found helpful. Most agreed they needed more help with identifying possible career areas and broadening their knowledge base within their fields of interest and that technology within the careers area needs upgrading. This is summed up below:

*I generally took subjects that I was good at and the career I want to pursue reflects the subjects that I am good at.* (Y2)

*My teachers looked at my results and then gave subject advice.* (Y3)

*We need better facilities for careers education, touch screens and headphones technology where we can sign up and they will send you emails from the organisation.* (Y3)

**Post-school students** – All six felt that they needed more help with identifying possible careers and gaining a larger overview of what was available to them within different fields of interest. Most had more than one interest area and it was hard to make the right choices with the lack of career information available to them. One student refers to her frustration with the Careers Advisor’s lack of knowledge, stating she wished she could have had a decent conversation with someone experienced in the careers field. Two students sum it up thus:

*The information from the Careers Advisor helped the most but if you had no clue like some of my friends and didn’t go to see the Careers Advisor and just took subjects that you liked then not helpful at all at school.* (PSA)
I needed a decent conversation with someone who could tell you the options and with experience in the careers field. (PSC)

**Careers Advisors** – There was general agreement that providing careers information was a key role of a Careers Advisor and that subject selection linked to career interests was a strong focus. Some also offered goal setting, career planning and other programmes aimed at assisting students to make informed career decisions. Two suggested the use of websites to gain information but agreed that this is just a tool and that students and their parents need help to navigate and understand the information available. Careers Advisor (A) suggests:

*The careers information provided to students is sufficient if each student has time systematically allotted to them but time constraints prevent this; some students have family who can help; websites can be useful but best when the student’s exploration is informed by someone trained in asking the right questions and offering useful guidance based on theory, research and experience. (CAA)*

and another stated:

*Careers information on its own is only ever going to be a tool; it needs the same information to be assessed by the parent who is the main influencer in the process. The students and parents need access to someone who can guide them through the complex process of making career decisions. (CAH)*

The findings demonstrate that all participants valued a broad range of careers resources and information and this will be discussed further in the following chapter.

**COMPARING THE THEORY AND APPLICATION OF CAREERS EDUCATION**

Each sample group was then asked about a series of career theory definitions to allow for a comparison and to examine their general understanding of each term. The students all
described ‘career’ as a pathway for life, earning money, a dream job, what you do for life and progression through the ranks. They all thought they were likely to have many careers during their lifetime, although two thought they would stay in their primary role and just progress within the same field. The Careers Advisors described ‘career’ from simplistic terms of paid activities from leaving school until retirement, through to more complex views of constantly changing patterns of work and education with career development being a lifelong process of skill acquisition gained from paid and unpaid work and family related roles.

The students were aware of the job market changes when comparing to their grandparents and parents, talking about their grandfathers having one job for life, not needing qualifications when they left school and finding work easily, through to their parents who could have qualifications from a degree or apprenticeship or entry-level job and still do well, but with regular job changes. They also talked about the need for more qualifications today, requiring work experience prior to securing full-time employment, more educational opportunities available to them with stair-casing options from foundation courses to postgraduate, more financial support from the government, more job opportunities for women and people from different cultures.

All of the students demonstrated some understanding of the term ‘lifelong learning’ stating it is about learning a lesson every day, continuing to learn through life, not stopping once you leave school or university, taking opportunities and that it never ends despite your age. When asked about transferrable skills, most students were able to provide an explanation. They suggested the following; how the skills you learn in one area can be applied to another, using your skills and putting them towards something else, for example, the science learned in nursing could be applied to computer engineering in terms of computer skills and thinking
skills, and another student gave the example of the police and the armed forces requiring similar physical requirements.

The Careers Advisors again provided a range of explanations from a quite simplistic view that you never stop learning, through to more complex explanations such as you never stop learning or gaining skills, knowledge or experience throughout your life and sometimes that is through doing a formal qualification, sometimes through the job you do and sometimes through experiences you go through in your life.

Each student sample group was then asked if the school had consulted with them on what advice and careers education they wanted and needed. The Year 13 students agreed that they didn’t get to choose what they wanted and that the school told them what they had to do via surveys, subject advice and so on. The post-school students’ results showed that three believed they were consulted, two said they were not and one said they were partly consulted. Careers Advisors were asked whether students should be consulted about what they require from careers education and guidance and most said that students should be consulted but they also suggested parents need to be consulted and that students often don’t know what they need.

Finally the Careers Advisors were asked if they thought the Ministry of Education handbook published in 2003 and revised in 2008 was relevant and helpful to students today in terms of careers education and guidance. They were also asked about the delivery modes and what students received in their school. The responses were mixed with some Careers Advisors using the handbook regularly while others had not consulted it for some time. Some thought the booklet was helpful while others challenged the validity of school-wide careers education.
being delivered by all teaching staff, as opposed to specialists who are trained and qualified in career development. These findings will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

1. Describe the term ‘career’

Focus Group – The focus group all contributed similar ideas, suggesting a career was something you are passionate about, what you are willing to do for the rest of your life, future goals, a pathway for life, getting more money, a dream job and so on, summed up with the following two contributions:

- A pathway for life that you choose to step forward in, not just a job but it branches out to other things. (FG7)
- Something you are passionate about and willing to do for the rest of your life, although you could have many careers and are not restricted to one. (FG3)

Year 13 students – The students had the same thoughts as the focus group, as illustrated below:

- To me a career means a job that I can get in the future through hard work and qualifications, so something I need to work towards in order for me to get somewhere professionally. (Y4)
- A pathway in life that I choose to head in occupationwise, can change, branch out, move up in levels, income is important – if happy in job the money will come. (Y2)

Post-school students – This sample group also suggested similar definitions but with a slightly sharper understanding of workplace context as demonstrated below:
A vocation, could be unpaid, a career is more narrow, getting into an organisation and climbing the ranks, a profession. (PSB)

Not just a job, having a job that could take you places, space to move into other areas, hierarchy to move up. (PSA)

**Careers Advisors** – All agreed that the term ‘career’ applies to a person’s life roles, the journey from leaving school until retirement. One provided a very simplistic view:

*The hopefully paid activities done between leaving school and retirement.*

(CAG)

whilst others offered a more complex explanation:

*Career is viewed as the different and varying roles people acquire throughout their life like paid work, being a wife, husband, mother, father, etc. People will change jobs every 2 – 3 years and will through their lives change the roles they have – all these different roles contribute to a skill set which enables people to travel their life journey (their career).* (CAH)

*Constantly changing patterns of work and education; career development is a lifelong process of skill acquisition and building through a continuum of learning, development and mastery.* (CAE)

2. **One or many careers in a lifetime**

Students were then asked if they expected to have one or many careers during their lifetime. The focus group and year 13 students all thought they would have several careers in their lifetime. In contrast, two out of the six post-school students planned to stay within their one career for life. The quotes below give some insight into their thinking:
I’m hoping to stay a nurse but not one place, so maybe a nurse here for a couple of years then go overseas and I’m interested in becoming an army medic or a paramedic later on. (Y4)

Same career as nothing else really interests me, not really good at anything else. (PSE)

3. Job market changes

Students were asked if they thought the job market had changed when compared to their grandparents’ and parents’ days. All agreed that it had and they provided the following insights:

Yes, today we have more technology, more choices and new jobs which didn’t exist in my parents’ day; females and different races have more jobs open to them; education offers more choices and opportunities like foundation courses compared to a small number of choices for subjects and jobs back then; more financial support from government, for example, Studylink, and better earning power now. (Y2)

I think in my grandparents’ day you had one career your whole life and they didn’t need experience when they first entered the job; parents halfway between – important to have a degree but not as important as it is nowadays. (PSF)

The job market is very competitive now and need a degree whereas before you could have an apprenticeship. (PSE)
4. Lifelong learning

Focus group – Two students did not know what this term meant but one then suggested it might mean courses linked to your work. The other five students all agreed that it referred to learning from experiences in life, always learning throughout your lifetime, staying updated with the times, always training at work and learning something new every day until you die. Student (FG7) sums up:

Always staying educated, learning from experiences in life, you learn something new every day living life, always training in work, staying updated with the times, education is the key to career development.

Year 13 students – All five students agreed that lifelong learning is about learning a lesson every day, continuing to learn through life, not stopping once you leave school or university, taking opportunities and that it never ends despite your age. When asked about transferrable skills, four of the five students were able to provide an explanation. They suggested the following; how the skills you learn in one area can be applied to another, using your skills and putting them towards something else, for example the science learned in nursing could be applied to computer engineering in terms of computer skills and thinking skills, and another student gave the example of the police and the armed forces requiring similar physical requirements. This is demonstrated below:

You learn for the rest of your life, each day there is something new to learn, you won’t stop learning until you die, your life experience, nursing – learn off colleagues, attend courses. Transferrable skills are the skills that you’ve got that you use for something else, example in nursing you use computing, thinking, science and this is also needed in computer engineering. (Y1)
**Post-school students** – Five of the six students were aware of the term lifelong learning and able to give an informed response. Collectively they suggested the following:

- You will never be fully informed on everything in this world and always learning new things, including language and culture. (PSA)
- As we go about our lives inevitably I will have to study more about what I am doing, clients, cases that have come before, listening to people and understanding where they are coming from, adding to my experience. (PSB)
- Learning is lifelong, you don’t just do it at university. (PSC)
- To me, lifelong learning is continuing to have passion for learning new things that interest you. It’s a frame of mind that builds on skills learned early on in childhood or tertiary. (PSE)

**Careers Advisors** – All eight had heard of the term lifelong learning, however the responses varied from very simplistic:

- Jargon, everyone keeps learning throughout their life. (CAG)
- You as a person continue to learn something new every day. (CAD)

...to more complex:

- Workers today must reinvent themselves, refresh their skills, become multi-skilled, be prepared to be marketable. This is becoming necessary due to our ever-changing world of work (CAA)
- I think it refers to the need to continually keep abreast of new knowledge and skill-sets in your present occupation. In addition the rapidly evolving job market means frequent career changes are facilitated or positively responded to by retraining. In a more holistic sense, continually challenging our current
thoughts/opinions and knowledge may have positive physical and mental health benefits. (CAC)

You never stop learning or gaining skills, knowledge or experience throughout your life and sometimes that is through doing a formal qualification, sometimes through the job you do and sometimes through experiences you go through in your life. (CAH)

5. Student voice or consultation

Each student sample group was asked if the school had consulted with them on what advice and careers education they wanted and needed. The focus group agreed that they didn’t get to choose what they wanted and that the school told them what they had to do via surveys, subject advice and so on. One student summed it up by stating:

Wish we could have elaborated on it more. We don’t get to choose what we want due to lack of resources and government funding. (FG7)

The Year 13 students were asked the same question and four out of five believed they had been consulted about what they wanted and needed. The following quotes support these findings:

All 7th formers had to meet with the Careers Advisor to talk about what we wanted to do once we leave school. (Y5)

Academic counselling day with help from the Careers Advisor, had forms to fill out in yr 12 and 13. Some of my friends are too confused and stay confused and never choose a path so do any kind of work. (Y3)
The post-school students were also asked about the consultation process they experienced at school and three believed they were consulted, two said they were not and one said they were partly consulted. The quotes below demonstrate these findings:

Sat down with the teacher and asked what kind of career and subjects I was interested in, then the Careers Advisor sent through some brochures from different universities and polytechnics and information on the career. (PSB)

Never asked us explicitly; daily notices offered things like the AUT seminar and you could get information if you asked for it. (PSE)

Careers Advisors were asked whether students should be consulted about what they require from careers education and guidance. Seven out of eight said that students should be consulted but they also suggested parents need to be consulted and that students often don’t know what they need. The following quotes summarise their responses:

I think that parents are the main stakeholder when it comes to careers guidance and that they should be consulted. It is useful to ask students for suggestions for how the guidance may be presented. (CAA)

Students don’t always know what it is that they need to know, nor the opportunities that are available. (CAB)

It’s part of the career counselling process to check with senior students as to what they think they need. Sometimes they have ideas, sometimes they don’t. It’s a focus of a written survey for all year 13 students. I suspect it comes out during our individual meetings during the year. (CAC)

Student voice is an integral part of the NZ Careers and Teaching Practice in schools, you only can improve in what you do if you are willing to reflect on your practice and ask your client group what they think. (CAH)
6. Career Education and Guidelines Booklet Relevancy

The Careers Advisors were asked if they thought the Ministry of Education handbook published in 2003 and revised in 2008 was relevant and helpful to students today in terms of careers education and guidance. They were also asked about the delivery modes and what students received in their school. The responses were mixed with some Careers Advisors using the handbook regularly while others had not consulted it for some time. Some thought the booklet was helpful while others challenged the validity of school-wide careers education being delivered by all teaching staff, as opposed to specialists who are trained and qualified in career development. All eight samples are included to demonstrate the wide-ranging responses:

I think it is relevant for schools to apply in their work with students.

However, my observation has been that while schools are able to work within such guidelines in a satisfying way, building good programmes and teams of staff to implement them, while they have funding (Designing Careers and CPaBL), but are not able to sustain the level of provision, mainly because of insufficient funds to pay teacher relief, extra photocopying, and IT resources. (CAA)

Yes – but ultimately the amount that can be done in school comes back to funding and a commitment on the part of the school to provide staffing that will allow us to do all the great things in the guidelines. We are fortunate at our school as our Principal is committed to career education and we are an academic counselling school with staff mentors as well. (CAB)
Haven’t read it for about a year and can’t find my copy at the time of writing.

I think that the value of such publications lies in helping the practitioner to develop a framework for delivery of careers-related activities in schools. Useful for evaluating your current programme. It’s also useful as an ideas generator when you are bogged down in the minutiae of ensuring your students on work experience have lunches. (CAC)

They are only guidelines. There is not enough information about helping the average students. (CAD)

It is an improved version and I have referred to it often and it has been useful for PD for classroom teachers. I personally had an input so I am biased. (CAE)

I will get back to you on this. (CAF)

Yes, encourages career information to be schoolwide, not just in the Careers Office. (CAG)

The guidelines seem to imply that you don’t need any expertise to help students in their career decision making. I think it is short sighted as you wouldn’t expect any other area in school – maths, English etc to be delivered by just anyone. The whole area of transition from school has become complex as has guiding students through it. There should be recognition of qualified
practitioners who understand the education system and the career development process. (CAH)

CONCLUSION

The findings highlight the very complex nature of careers education and guidance and show there are marked differences in terms of what the students and post-students in this study think they need in order to make informed career decisions and what the Careers Advisors are willing and able to deliver at the present time within the secondary sector.

When asked about the relevance of careers education currently on offer it became clear that there are many gaps and opportunities for improvement in the delivery of careers education and guidance at the secondary school level such as work experience, visits to tertiary institutes, assembly speakers, more focus on junior students and so on.

The data also shows that most students and Careers Advisors have some understanding of career theory but there are also many gaps in knowledge in both sample groups, when compared to what is prescribed in the curriculum handbook.

These findings will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION of the FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines and discusses the key findings that emerged from analysis of the data collected during the focus group interview, the semi-structured interviews with students in Year 13 and two years post-school, and the questionnaire given to the Careers Advisors in this study. The first section explores the processes and influences affecting career decision making as identified by students and Careers Advisors. The second section examines the relevance of current careers education and guidance which students receive within the secondary school sector, and the third section looks at the role of Careers Advisors and the theory and delivery of careers education as prescribed in the Ministry of Education handbook, including their professional qualifications. Each of the themes identified will be discussed with reference to the literature review in Chapter Two.

THE PROCESSES AND INFLUENCES INVOLVED IN STUDENTS’ CAREER DECISION MAKING

One of the aims of this research is to identify the main processes and influences which affect students when they are making their career and/or future study decisions. The results are outlined below:

Parental and family influence

This was considered to be the strongest influence on career decision making by all of the research participants and this is supported by the New Zealand and overseas literature. Boyd,
Chalmers and Kumekawa (2001) showed in *The Beyond School* project that the influence of family members and relatives stood out as the information source most used by the largest proportion of students and this was further confirmed by another New Zealand study undertaken by Hipkins and Vaughan (2002) the following year. Policy guidelines for school evaluation in Scotland include the area of careers education and guidance and recommends that pupils and parents might be involved in the process (Howieson & Semple, 2002). A report done to aid schools in California to create career-ready students also suggests that parents must be involved in the process (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009). All of the Careers Advisors who participated in this research suggested that parents have the most influence on the careers decision making process with their children and that there needed to be a stronger partnership with the school to ensure parents are educated and guided through this complex process.

**Careers Advisors’ influence**

Half the students participating in this study believed the Careers Advisor had some influence on their decisions but this was heavily weighted towards the information they provided on subject choices linked to career choices and information about tertiary providers, entry requirements and scholarships. This was at the expense of individually tailored careers education and exploration of what the student was interested in and what the outside influences were on that individual. This concurs with the literature which suggests post-secondary education is not a one-size-fits-all proposition and that little focus has been given to students as individuals (Meury, 2009; Noyes, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Southern Regional Education Board, 2009). Researchers have found that students’ experience of school and the learning within it is strongly shaped by the cultures and practices of their everyday lives, including music, friends, media and beliefs so policymakers and careers
advisors must understand these influences in order to fully engage students (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Thomson & Gunter, 2006). Other research suggests that what is happening to students in their lives outside of school strongly influences the work they do in school and that perceived work opportunities or family structures or gender roles have powerful impacts on how students see and respond to what the school provides (Levin, 2000; Patton & McMahon, 2006).

The literature also supports the notion that careers education today needs to provide tools for coping with ‘chaos and unpredictability’ in career making decisions and how to navigate these pathways, in a non-linear, ever-changing careers landscape which requires lifelong learning and adaptability (Patton & McMahon, 2006; Vaughan, 2003). Meury (2009) asserts that the right education today may not look anything like the traditional college experience of the past. Lim and Patton (2006) suggest that there is a mismatch in terms of what clients expect from career counselling and what they are prepared to provide, and conclude that all clients should leave a career interview with a tangible outcome such as a written plan of action, strategies and skills for seeking further information, handouts, brochures and a list of contacts and that this will require formal training to provide the level of facilitative support expected by clients.

**Deans’ influence**

The students involved in this study all agreed that the Dean had no influence on their career decision making which could be a concern given the day to day and weekly assembly contact most Deans have with students. Some suggested a greater focus on encouraging students to do well academically and to start exploring their career options in junior school, explaining to students how qualifications link to future careers choices, bringing in speakers from different
career areas right from Year 9 and helping to inspire them with appropriate role models so students have something to aspire to would have been helpful. The literature suggests students are influenced by many school experiences in a multi-directional set of pathways from assembly speakers, to school staff, to parents and media, so the more students are exposed to the better, in terms of making informed careers decisions (Anderson, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

The *Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2008) handbook suggests careers education and guidance should be a whole school responsibility and an essential element of pastoral care which is led by Deans. This did not appear to be happening in the schools of the participants of my study.

**Form and classroom teachers’ influence**

Most student participants and all of the Careers Advisors suggested that teachers played a part especially with subject selection, but as identified earlier in this section, this is potentially problematic as a teacher may not be well advised in terms of how the subjects, particularly those outside their area of expertise actually link to careers. Also a lack of knowledge of the entry requirements to training establishments, the context in which the students are trying to make their decisions (social, cultural, family, for example) and therefore the advice may not be very relevant or accurate. Research suggests that students are strongly influenced by the cultures and practices of their everyday lives so these must be understood in order to fully engage students (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Thomson & Gunter, 2005).
The *Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2008) handbook quotes one deputy principal as saying “getting teachers out of school and into work environments related to their subjects has become a major element of our professional development” (p. 25) as it helps them to understand where students will go when they leave school. The CPaBL programme supported by Team Solutions in 2007 was designed to address this by training all teaching staff, Deans and deputy principals to become careers educators in the classroom and the revised 2008 *Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* handbook also encourages this approach to school-wide careers educators. However, as one Careers Advisor points out “The guidelines imply that you don’t need any expertise to help students in their career decision making. I think this is short sighted as you wouldn’t expect any other area in school, for example maths or English to be delivered by just anyone. The whole area of transition from school has become complex as has guiding students through it. There should be recognition of qualified practitioners who understand the education system and the career development process” (CAH). Also, only one hundred schools were selected to participate in this project during 2007 and 2008, which left many schools without any support or training and the project was then disbanded. De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) assert that teachers and counsellors should do an internship with business or industry as part of their professional development to maintain professional credentials.

**Friends’ and family friends’ influence**

The students did not rate the influence of friends very highly but three referred to the influence of family friends who acted as mentors and encouraged them to do well. One student from the focus group talked about how family friends acted as her mentors, as both came from medical professions and they gave her science books to read and offered her advice about nursing. The Careers Advisors thought friends had a greater influence than the
students suggested but this may relate more to subject selection rather than career choices as students like to be in the same classes as their peers and perhaps this needs to be explored more deeply in a future research project, as this could have a limiting impact on future choices.

In a diagram, the handbook refers to peers as having an influence on careers decision making but this is not explored in any detail (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 12). The literature suggests that peers definitely have an influence on decision making (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Thomson & Gunter, 2005). My study also reveals the influence that family friends and the boss of a parent had on several of the participants.

**Sports coaches’ influence**

The sample group comprised students who did not play sport so they did not think a sports coach would influence them. The Careers Advisors all felt that a coach could have an influence especially if participation in a coveted team is linked to attendance in class, academic achievement and so on. The literature suggests that individuals do not live in isolation and their social system can influence career choices (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

**Church influence**

A third of the students felt their religious beliefs affected their career decision making, with all of those students choosing careers which help others in some way. This could be an important dimension to explore in any careers development model but this does not feature explicitly in the handbook model (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 12). It could sit within family or community within this diagram but perhaps has a
bigger influence on decision making than the handbook implies. Vaughan (2008) asserts that students need help to construct their careers in relation to their lives. The handbook suggests ‘personal values can impact their choice of work style and how their social, cultural and economic values may incline them towards particular fields of work (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 12).

Media/TV/Magazine/Internet influence

Some students thought the media had an influence on their career decisions and talked about the glamorous medical programmes like Grey’s Anatomy and how they wanted to work in a hospital like that. This recognition of the influence of the media is important and suggests there is a need to educate students on the influences of the media as part of a balanced careers programme, as highlighted in the handbook diagram (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 12). There is however no detail provided in the handbook on how or what influences the media has on students’ careers decision making and how this topic should be addressed. The literature also suggests that media, music and fashion can all have an influence on career decisions (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Thomson & Gunter, 2005).

Other influences

The participants raised a number of other important issues that affected their decisions such as life experience, upbringing, where participants were raised, the school they attended, their socio-economic situation, what their parents did for work, peer pressure not to do well at school, getting involved with the wrong friends, access to work experience and part-time work, speakers at assembly and from tertiary institutes, work shadowing, speaking to people currently working in the career field of interest, projected income linked to a particular
career, costs associated with the training and the scholarships available, Gateway, and industry representatives.

This demonstrates both the complexity of careers decision making and the many influences which affect students as they traverse the path from school to beyond. Some of these influences will be discussed below in more detail, as the participants considered that a number of experiences and information were vital for informed decision making but very few students had access through their existing school programmes.

THE RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR

This section examined the relevance of careers education and guidance as viewed by the students who received it and then the Careers Advisors who delivered careers education and guidance within secondary schools. Each sample group was asked what they would have found helpful when they were trying to make their career decisions. The common themes that arose were: the opportunity to participate in work experience relevant to their career interests, visits to expos, tertiary campus programmes and other course providers, visits by university liaison staff, past students speaking at assemblies and motivational speakers, and more information provided on the types of careers available.

Useful guidance and support for making informed career decisions

A) Work experience

There was strong support amongst the student participants of this study for the school to provide some form of work experience, work shadowing, and access to people working within their career field of interest so they could interview and observe them in an authentic
work environment to allow for more informed decision making. Several were interested in medical careers and found it extremely difficult to gain access to a hospital setting on their own, suggesting they needed the assistance of the school. Others organised their own work shadowing but would have liked more input from the school and agreed that they were confident enough to arrange this but many of their friends would not be able to.

The students talked about Gateway and how this was considered a non-academic subject with restricted entry so they were not able to capitalise on this opportunity. Several suggested that offering a week of Gateway in the school holidays or even a day in a work place would have helped them. The only student in the sample group who was currently involved in a Gateway programme said she found it very useful and would definitely be pursuing a career as a bank teller as a result of her experience at the bank where she was placed. The literature supports this view with Horne (2010) stating that courses which were once considered of secondary importance and often for less academic students are essential in 21st century learning. Also that work placements should form an integral part of education today and should be closely linked to students’ career interests and core subjects at school (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Horne, 2010; Southern Regional Education Board, 2009). Some students suggested extending Work Choice Day to students in Year 12 and 13, so students could visit two places of interest and hear people talking about the different roles in each organisation over two years, rather than just in Year 12. Places were also restricted in this scheme and the students all thought that everyone in Year 12 and 13 should be able to participate.

Some Careers Advisors suggested they would like to offer work experience to students to help with career decision making but time to organise it and funds to support this type of opportunity were not currently available. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) assert that school
counsellors need time to strengthen school programs involving family and the community and that school boards and principals should make this an official component of school organisation and the career counsellor’s role.

The *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2008) handbook does not make any suggestions on how schools should set up, resource and manage such programmes. The handbook also suggests that “the connections with learning pathways provided through funding sources such as STAR and Gateway are particularly important” (p. 19) for a co-ordinated school programme but who should be offered these opportunities is not discussed. Research suggests that students often experience a multi-directional set of pathways which are influenced by school experiences such as Gateway and other work experience programmes and STAR taster courses (Anderson, 2005; Horne, 2010; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). The students all suggested that academic students are not well catered for in this model and that it mostly serves non-academic students. One Careers Advisor also raised concerns for students of average ability, suggesting she would like to offer more opportunities for these students if time and resources were available. A recent New Zealand study confirms this, suggesting that careers education is targeted at certain groups and is more about intervention for ‘at risk’ young people, rather than careers education for all students (Vaughan, 2008). Overseas research also supports this finding, with de Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) concluding that providing career development information for *all* students is not a high priority for most school districts, schools and boards in California.

**B) Visits to expos, tertiary campus programmes, other course providers**

All of the student participants agreed that visits to career expos, tertiary campus programmes and other offsite programmes were helpful in informing them of the options available for post-school study. However, some had not been offered this opportunity at school or did not
value it when offered due to peer pressure or not being engaged with the process. Students must participate and own the process to ensure buy-in (Howieson & Semple, 2000). Repetto (2001) also suggests student readiness and maturity should be considered within careers education. Most agreed that it would have been beneficial to have access to these programmes in junior school when they were required to make critical subject choices for Year 11.

One student shared her experience of attending a tertiary campus as part of a Year 10 Pasifika programme and the profound and positive experience this had in terms of her future learning and motivation to succeed and she suggested that all Pasifika students would benefit from such an experience in junior school and particularly those from low decile secondary schools. Bullock and Wikely’s (2001) United Kingdom study involving Year 9 students showed that many felt they were being pressured to make subject decisions before they were ready and that they knew their career interests were likely to change as they grew up, so felt careers education was a waste of time.

Another student suggested that a visit to the Police College would have been helpful and several talked about ‘Student for a Day’ programmes and how they would have liked to spend a day at the tertiary institutions they were considering studying at. All of the post-school students stressed that the open day visit to the University of Auckland did not go deep enough in terms of helping prospective students to understand degree choices, degree structures, how the university calendar worked, how to enrol, postgraduate study and the compulsory undergraduate subjects linked to this. They would all have liked a day on campus, sitting in on lectures, talking to university students, course advisors and lecturers in their fields of interest.
Half the Careers Advisor participants stated they would like to offer students more opportunities to participate in offsite programmes and believe these add value to the career decision making process, but they lacked the resources and funding to provide them. One Careers Advisor suggested the school offers an extensive range of offsite programmes but in reality, only a very select group of students ever get to participate in programmes such as STAR taster courses and Fono (a careers programme for Pasifika students in senior school) and often they are targeted at ‘at risk’ youth, so ‘academic’ and ‘average’ students do not get any exposure (Vaughan, 2008).

Participants also referred to the influence of parents and the need to educate them on what is currently available for students, as often they are poorly informed and unaware of the number of new and emerging careers and study options which may be of interest to their children. As a consequence students often make poor decisions and have to change their courses once they get to university or polytechnic. Given the substantial costs attached to any form of tertiary study today and the effect of student loans on the economy, this should be a pressing issue for the government, secondary schools and tertiary providers to address. Hipkins and Vaughan (2002) assert that schools should involve parents in subject option evenings and that “school-parent communication on the matter of subject choice and subject structuring”, (p. 113) warrants careful attention. Meury (2009) suggests students and their families need to be better informed about their options, the costs, and future earning potential and that advisors’ should encourage them to think as broadly as possible about the future.

Some participants suggested that this communication needs to go wider than school subjects, and that schools and tertiary institutions should take more responsibility to both educate and support parents to help their children make informed study and career decisions from Year 9.
The literature clearly demonstrates that parents have the most influence on students’ career decision making and this is reinforced by my own study findings (Anderson, 2005; Hipkins and Vaughan, 2002). However, the decision making process should ultimately be owned by students and their voice heard by both parents and the school, to gain the most positive future career outcomes based on personal ownership and responsibility.

C) Visits by university liaison staff, past students, motivational speakers

All of the Year 13 research participants agreed that speakers at assembly and visits from university liaison staff were motivating, helpful in regard to entry requirements for tertiary and for providing information on scholarships, student loans and so on. However, they would have liked to have heard from people currently working in ‘real’ jobs from as broad a range of careers as possible, rather than just focussing on past students who are currently studying at university. One suggested that many students do not plan to go on to university and that they are poorly catered for at school and that more emphasis should be placed on Polytechnics, apprenticeships and other forms of training to be more inclusive.

The post-school participants all felt they needed more help in selecting universities, degree structures, and postgraduate study options, how pre-requisites work and so on. They suggested the university liaison visits were generalised, rushed and with nominal time for questions at the end of the presentation. They also stated that the Careers Advisors and teaching staff were lacking in knowledge when it came to structuring degrees, as were parents, and one student ended up taking papers which now preclude her from doing postgraduate study in her subject of choice. The handbook quotes the Ministry of Education Tertiary Education Strategy 2007 – 12 which states that “strong school to tertiary education connections that provide good information for all students’ decisions about where, when and
how to engage in tertiary education are needed. Tertiary education organisations and schools are expected to continue to develop connections to support students to move from one setting to the next” (Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 32).

All of the Careers Advisors provided students with access to university liaison staff, prospectus information, website links, and general tertiary information but most agreed that information was only a tool in the process and that the challenges were around interpretation, educating parents and students’ motivation to do the research required.

D) More information on types of careers available

The participants all wanted more help with understanding what types of careers were available, firstly within their general field of interest, for example, all of the careers associated with medicine or health, and secondly in a much broader sense of what is available today, what the new and emerging careers consist of and better access to interactive information about careers. As mentioned earlier, they would have liked more assembly speakers, who represented all industry sectors, with a much broader approach to careers education from Year 9. They also suggested that there is a lack of careers resources in regard to career fields and that it would be helpful to click on a link, for example, on medical careers and have every type of career, entry requirements, recommended school subjects and every possible place of study in New Zealand linked to those careers on the one site. Horne (2010) suggests that schools need to keep up with technology, and make core skills relevant to students, to show them that their academic achievement is directly tied to their later quality of life. De Cos, Can and Salling (2009) suggest “the rapid and continual changes in technology might be used to shape how career-oriented information is presented in the framework” (p. 5).
The participants also wanted access to a wider range of DVDs and other interactive technology including podcasts and people speaking about their careers and jobs in a workplace site where students could see what they do without having to leave the classroom. This would be a cost effective way of addressing the concerns of most of the sample groups in terms of exposure to real life situations and people during a normal working day without the need for visits, transport, permission slips, appropriate clothing and so on.

The post-school research group suggested the careers education they received at school was heavily weighted towards subject selection, academic results and tertiary requirements, rather than the careers options available to them, their skills, interests, family circumstances, beliefs and values. Most agreed that they needed more help with identifying possible career areas, broadening their base within their fields of interest and that the technology available was in need of upgrading. De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) agree, and suggest that schools need to link with businesses to provide experiential learning for students, as employers feel learning is too heavily focussed on theory and that students gain an understanding of the industry they may be interested in working in and can explore their career interests while visiting a company. Horne (2010) goes further by challenging whether the current American education system is providing the technological skills required to survive global competition and to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce. This raises concerns in regard to the careers education and theory being delivered in some schools and the handbook guidelines which suggest all students should have individualised career plans “which are inclusive of their cultural identities, values and contexts” (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008). Other research suggests little focus has been given to students as individuals and how they navigate towards employment (Noyes, 2005; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003).
The Careers Advisors saw the provision of careers information particularly linked to subject choices and tertiary options as key to their role. They emphasised the need to provide the information to parents as well to ensure they were well informed. The handbook suggests that Careers Advisors should ensure that career information is “relevant, up-to-date and easily accessible for students and staff” (Career Education and Guidance for New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 29). Some mentioned other careers programmes that they ran or oversaw which involved goal setting and career planning but often this takes place in the junior school as part of a Social Science programme or with a form teacher with little value given to it by the students, and the trained careers staff are not directly involved. Unless students are able to make the connections between the careers theory being taught and how it affects their future choices and decision making then they are unlikely to engage (Horne, 2010; Repetto, 2001; Thomson & Gunter, 2005).

COMPARING THE THEORY AND APPLICATION OF CAREERS EDUCATION

The final part of the research examined career theory and concepts to allow for comparison within and across the participant groups. Also to compare this with the theory set down by the Ministry of Education in the curriculum handbook for New Zealand schools and within the literature on careers education and guidance. These career terms were selected as they are considered essential to any careers education programme being delivered in schools.

1. Describe the term ‘career’

All of the student participants provided similar meanings and definitions for the term ‘career’ but those in Year 13 were more focussed on qualifications compared to the post-school group who gave slightly more in-depth answers and showed a greater understanding of how the term relates to an actual workplace scenario. Both groups were focussed on the workplace,
hierarchical structures and qualifications allowing promotion and they did not consider “roles in the home and the community, and leisure activities” as being part of a career. Only one student mentioned unpaid work (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 6). This may suggest that current careers education in some schools is not meeting the requirements of the handbook on which the Education Review Office would measure a schools performance in the area of careers education and guidance. Overseas research suggests there is a need to monitor, assess and rank schools on the career readiness of students and that clear indicators should be developed and benchmarked against the real demands of the global economy and society and against schools’ progress and performance (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Hassel, 2009).

The study also suggests students may not be fully informed on how all aspects of their lives contribute to their career, also known as transferable skills, and this could limit their ability to change jobs or careers in the future, and to write an effective curriculum vitae to support job applications. The handbook suggests that students “need to become resilient career managers” (p. 7) and to be able to “make life- and career-enhancing decisions” (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 10). Vaughan (2003) asserts that for young people to realise their full working potential which is linked to future economic and social outcomes, appropriate careers education is important.

The Careers Advisors in this research offered a range of explanations of the term ‘career’ from very simplistic and referring only to paid activities done between leaving school and retirement, to more in-depth definitions which reflected the handbook definition and showed that they had a much wider understanding of careers theory. While it is difficult to generalise from a small sample, there is a correlation between qualifications held, with those who gave
the simpler answers not holding postgraduate qualifications within career development and those who provided more detailed explanations all having these qualifications. This finding may be of interest for school principals and the Ministry of Education and it may be time to acknowledge the need to have qualified careers practitioners in all schools.

One Careers Advisor in the study held no postgraduate qualifications and half had qualifications in social work and counselling rather than in careers development and throughout the questionnaire their responses reflected a lack of depth in terms of the latest careers theory. Patton and McMahon (2006) assert that career counselling needs to change to be more relevant, moving towards constructivist approaches which focus on all aspects of the individual and moving away from the counsellor as expert and towards a more narrative approach. Lim and Patton (2006) suggest that careers counsellors need to have formal training to provide the level of facilitative support expected by clients.

2. One or many careers in a lifetime
The student participants were asked about this as the researcher wanted to see if they understood the changing world of work and to look a little deeper at their understanding from a theoretical point of view. All of those who participated in the study were aware that they were likely to have several career changes over their lifetime and some were already planning for this in regards to their qualifications. However the students did not talk about redundancy, how a recession or share market crash might affect employment, war or natural disasters. They were just focussed on gaining qualifications which appears to be the general focus of careers education, something confirmed throughout my study. The handbook suggests students need to “understand the relationship between work, society and the economy...and the concept of the global economy and its impact on individuals and society” (Career
Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p.9). Hassel (2009) goes so far as to suggest schools should be measured on student career readiness using indicators which reflect the demands of the global economy and society, hence closely linking careers development education to real life. Clearly this was not the case with the student participants in my study and suggests the curriculum is not being followed in all schools.

3. **Job market changes**

Students were asked if they thought the job market had changed when compared to their grandparents’ and parents’ days as this allowed for even deeper exploration in terms of career theory and the students understanding of the world of work today. All agreed the job market had changed considerably and they suggested that students today needed tertiary qualifications, and work experience before they could get a full-time job and that the job market was more competitive now. Also they noted that technology played a big part in most jobs, that there are more career choices available, especially for women and those from other cultures, there are more educational options with foundation courses and stair-casing from one course or level to another. Also financial support is easier to obtain from the government. They also suggested that their grandfathers had one career for life, that they could start without any qualifications or experience and their parents were better off if they had a degree but they could also succeed with an apprenticeship or entry-level job.

It would be interesting to ask the same question of parents as I suspect many may be unaware of the significant changes in the structure of the work force today. The student participants also failed to identify the changing nature of employment and the fact that many people work on contract, have several part-time jobs rather than the traditional full-time role, and redundancy and restructures were a normal part of work today. Little was said about
retraining and complete career changes which are also common today and reflect the concept of lifelong learning. Vaughan (2008) asserts a useful change in the delivery of careers education could be in helping students to navigate both predictable and unpredictable career changes, flexible working conditions, skill portability and transferability. She also suggests that Careers Advisors need support to change their approach to careers education, and her latest research findings demonstrate “a lack of consistency across students’ formal careers education experiences and careers staff ability to provide careers education consistent with career development and management” which means students may struggle to understand the shifts between traditional linear careers approaches and the new emergent career trends and not have the skills to navigate appropriately (Vaughan, 2008, p 66).

4. Lifelong learning

The students in this study all demonstrated some understanding of the term lifelong learning with the post-school students linking this more closely to a work situation and needing to up-skill and keep training. However, there was no connection suggested for general life experience, parenting, volunteering, coaching a sports team, running a youth group and so on, as things that also contribute to lifelong learning and transferable skills. Vaughan (2008) asserts that Careers Advisors need to equip students with skills to engage in lifelong learning. De Cos, Chan and Salling (2009) suggest workers in the new economy may have to work up to fifty years to realise one or more careers and it is unclear whether students understand the possible changes in the nature of employment and the need to be flexible. The handbook also suggests that participation in the workforce today demands lifelong learning and enduring capacity to manage change and that students need to be taught the attitudes, knowledge and transferable skills to become self-reliant career managers (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008).
The Careers Advisors in the study had all heard of the term as well but their responses ranged from very simplistic to quite detailed theoretical explanations. Again, this might suggest a lack of training and qualifications and the need for Careers Advisors in the future to hold a professional qualification as a compulsory part of their job, as the complexity of the answers correlated with careers qualifications held, or the lack thereof. The handbook refers to National Educational Guideline (NEG) 3 which suggests careers education should “develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by New Zealanders to compete successfully in the modern, ever-changing world” (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 5). This study suggests this may not be happening within careers education and guidance programmes in some New Zealand secondary schools.

5. **Student voice or consultation**

Student voice and whether students were consulted about what they needed in reference to careers education and guidance showed that some students were asked what they thought they needed but with a strong emphasis placed on subject selection and tertiary study options. In several cases the students did not know what they wanted to do and were not in a position to ask for the right advice and information. This might suggest that if students were consulted more generally about their career decision needs and treated more as individuals, alternative options could be provided for those students, such as card sorts, mapping exercises, software programmes, the use of appropriate internet sites, visits to post-school educational providers and workplaces. Levin (2000) suggests successful learning and work environments must be meaningful and motivating for students, taking into account what individual learners bring.

Instead many students are slipping through the net and are not making informed decisions about their subject choices or career options which may impact on wellbeing, future earnings
potential and productivity both at school and in the workplace. A report in the United States suggests a multiple pathways approach for all students is needed which offers a rigorous academic foundation combined with rich, authentic learning drawn from a career field of particular interest to the student and that this is more likely to engage students and keep them attending school (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009). Vaughan and Roberts (2007) suggest that failure to appreciate the deeper meanings of events and young people’s frames of reference, particularly those who are socially excluded or subject to intervention, can have catastrophic consequences for the individual and ultimately their community. Unemployment, crime, incarceration and mental illness are often associated with youth who are disengaged at school and lost in transition (Watts, 2001).

The literature also suggests that if students were consulted, Careers Advisors would have a better understanding of their personal situations, what affects their career decision making, and what careers education and support is therefore relevant to each individual (Patton & McMahon, 2006). Researchers also suggest there are tensions between the ways that adults and students understand learning and what is relevant to youth today, coupled with government policy linked to economic and social considerations which impact on society (Kane & Maw, 2005; Smith, 2007; Vaughan, 2003).

The Careers Advisors in this study all thought they consulted with students to determine their needs but again this was mostly in the context of subject selection linked to possible career options and tertiary study. It was apparent that only one participant had any real understanding of consultation in a wider context and that was more around improvement regarding own practice, rather than really exploring what students today need to experience and be exposed to in order to make informed career decisions. Three suggested it was the
parents who needed to be consulted as they were the main decision-makers and influencers regarding their children’s future careers and study options. However, it is the student who needs to control and own the process to ensure the most positive future career outcomes. Meury (2009) asserts that education is a personal, individual investment, and students need guidance to make decisions that fit.

Vaughan (2003) asserts that relatively little research has been done where young people’s experiences are placed at the centre and she suggests that careers education “research and policy is structured by quite particular concepts of youth, adulthood and transition” (p. 1) which has been generated by adults. Others support this, suggesting careers education and guidance has been developed without any meaningful consultation with students and is just done to them as part of their general schooling (Levin, 2000; Howieson & Semple, 2000). In 1991 Michael Fullan posed the question “What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered?” alerting educationalists to their failure to listen intelligently to students (cited in Macbeath, Myers & Demetriou, 2001). Assumptions made by policymakers and school administrators that subject choices, future planning and exploring careers are a high priority for students, are misguided and flawed by adult expectations (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Watts, 2001). Most research into schooling that has investigated both the pupil and teacher perspective has highlighted a divergence in views and the low power and status given to students’ views (Howieson & Semple, 2000; Vaughan, 2003). Kane and Maw (2005) suggest that “good practice must necessarily be informed by students’ needs and therefore by consultation with students” (p. 311) and others argue that student consultation reflects democracy and citizenship rights (Fielding, 2001; Kirby, 2001; Prieto, 2001; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003).
Studies done in the United States show it is important to get student input from the fringes and that the influence of racial, class and gender identities affect student participation and therefore careers decision making, as do socio-economic and other factors (Brooker & Mac Donald, 1999; Lensmire, 1998; Mitra, 2001; Silva, 2001). Fielding (2001) suggests that education could be transformed if schools embraced a person-centred education where staff and students work in partnership to create a learning community.

It would appear that student voice and consultation is not occurring effectively within the careers education and guidance framework delivered in the schools in this research and the literature would suggest this is a worldwide issue which must be addressed to ensure student participation and ownership of what is a critical time of decision making which could have major future impacts on an individual’s ability to reach his or her academic, work, income and economic potential.

6. **Careers Education and Guidelines Booklet relevancy**

Finally, the Careers Advisors in this study were asked if they thought the 2008 revised Ministry of Education Guidelines booklet, *Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* was relevant and helpful to students today in terms of careers education and guidance. One stated they had not read it for a year, another said they would get back to me, suggesting they were not referring to it, and six agreed it was helpful to some extent. The use of the handbook was varied with some Careers Advisors using it to encourage careers education across the school and being delivered by classroom teachers and other staff. In contrast, one argued that the handbook encouraged school-wide careers education, suggesting anyone could teach and offer careers advice in what is a very complex and theoretically-
founded area, which should be concerning to careers educators from a professional point of view.

Others used it to gain ideas and to help structure careers programmes for different year levels. One suggested the book does not offer enough information to assist average students and another had contributed to the booklet so suggested she was biased towards its usefulness. The foreword of the booklet itself acknowledges the many contributor groups, including school leaders, teachers and other individuals who contributed to the book, but parents and students were not referred to as stakeholder groups and were therefore not consulted. The literature asserts that careers education is just done to students for their own good, with the assumption made that experts within the wider field know best, in what is a very hierarchical system of decision making related to education policy and guidelines, funding and delivery rather than what is best for the individual student (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Levin, 2000; Vaughan, 2003).

I would therefore conclude that students should be consulted more and the handbook could be revised to reflect students’ current needs and influences in a student-focussed careers education process, and policymakers and schools need to be more open to consultation and building effective partnerships with parents and students. This should develop into a practical expression of an educational relationship which will lead to a more democratic way of life within the education sector and the community (Fielding, 2001; Kirby, 2001; Prieto, 2001; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003). To improve the consistent delivery of careers education across all schools it may be time to introduce a benchmarked system which measures career readiness of all students from years 7 – 13 and ranks schools accordingly; also to review the professional qualifications of Careers Advisors.
This study has also identified a number of ways in which students could be better prepared for making such critical career decisions from Year 10 subject selections through to where they study and work in the future and that perhaps the guidelines need to offer more practical delivery suggestions for Careers Advisors’, Deans’, and teachers’, including how they reach parents and engage students.

The following chapter will summarise the findings, identify the limitations of my study and conclude with recommendations for Careers Advisors’, Principals’, Deans’, teachers’, policymakers’ and the authors of the current handbook published by the Ministry of Education, to support school boards and educators on the delivery of careers education and guidance within secondary schools in New Zealand. There will also be recommendations for further areas of research to be conducted in the future.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

As outlined in Chapter Five, the findings follow, then a discussion of the implications and recommendations for practice. The processes and influences involved in careers decision making are identified, the relevance of current careers education in the secondary school sector examined and the theoretical concepts which assist in informed lifelong careers decision making compared to those in the handbook provided by the Ministry of Education.

This study adds to the limited body of literature currently available in the New Zealand context of careers education and guidance from the students’ perspectives and that of the Careers Advisors. It may be useful for future policymakers and the authors of the Ministry of Education handbook for careers education and guidance in secondary schools. Also for school boards and principals who have a vested interest in ensuring careers education delivery is relevant and useful and complies with Education Review Office (ERO) expectations, with links to parents and the wider community. It also questions the role of Careers Advisors and their current practice and qualifications, and others involved with careers education within the school and externally. The limitations of the study will also be outlined and further research opportunities suggested.

REVIEW

Four different sample groups were approached to take place in this study and the following volunteered to do so; seven students currently studying in Year 13 from one Auckland
secondary school who took part in a focus group, five Year 13 students from two Auckland secondary schools who took part in semi-structured interviews, six post-school students who took part in semi-structured interviews from different secondary schools around New Zealand, and eight Careers Advisors from secondary schools around New Zealand who completed a questionnaire. Data gathered from the focus group helped to inform the semi-structured interview questions and questionnaire, as did key information and themes that emerged from the literature review.

**RESEARCH AIMS**

This research examined whether or not the current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools was relevant and helpful for students during their decision making process by asking the students directly what it is they wanted and needed. The research also examined the role of Careers Advisors and their understanding of the influences and processes which affect students during their career decision making, the qualifications they hold and their understanding and delivery of career theory, as prescribed in the handbook.

The data gathered sought to answer the following research questions:

Question 1: To investigate the processes and influences involved in students’ experiences of career decision making in Year 13 and two years post-secondary school.

Question 2: To examine students’ perceptions of the relevance of current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools.
Question 3: To examine Careers Advisors understanding of the processes and influences of students’ career decision making, what they currently deliver, the usefulness of the current Ministry of Education handbook guidelines for careers education and to consider the relevance of professional qualifications.

CONCLUSION

THE PROCESSES AND INFLUENCES INVOLVED IN STUDENTS’ CAREER DECISION MAKING

Parental and family influence was considered very strong by all participants and the students stated that Careers Advisors had some influence, Deans had little influence, form and classroom teachers had some influence, particularly around subject selection, friends, particularly family friends, had some influence, sports coaches had little influence, church and religious beliefs had some influence and the media had little influence. This was in contrast to the Careers Advisors who all thought each group had more influence than the students’ responses. The participants also came up with a range of other influences such as family circumstances, socio-economic factors and decile rating of school, life experiences, being involved in Gateway and other work experience opportunities, assembly speakers, liaison staff visits from tertiary institutes and so on.

THE RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR

The research then examined the relevance of careers education and guidance as viewed by the students who received it and then the Careers Advisors who delivered careers education and guidance within secondary schools. Each sample group was asked what they would have found helpful when they were trying to make their career decisions. The common themes were the opportunity to participate in work experience relevant to their career interests, visits
to expos, tertiary campus programmes and other course providers, visits by university liaison staff, past students speaking at assemblies, motivational speakers and more information provided on the types of careers available.

COMPARING THE THEORY AND APPLICATION OF CAREERS EDUCATION

All of the participants were then asked about a series of career theory definitions to allow for a comparison and to examine their general understanding of each term. The students described ‘career’ as a pathway for life, earning money, a dream job, what you do for life and progression through the ranks. They all thought they were likely to have many careers during their lifetime, although two thought they would stay in their primary role and just progress within the same field. The Careers Advisors described ‘career’ using simplistic terms of paid activities from leaving school until retirement, through to more complex views of constantly changing patterns of work and education with career development being a lifelong process of skill acquisition gained from paid and unpaid work and family related roles.

The students were aware of the job market changes when comparing to their grandparents and parents, talking about their grandfathers having one job for life, not needing qualifications when they left school and finding work easily, through to their parents who could have qualifications from a degree or apprenticeship or entry-level job and still do well, but with regular job changes. They also talked about the need for higher level qualifications today, requiring work experience prior to securing full-time employment, more educational opportunities available to them with staircasing options from foundation courses to postgraduate, more financial support from the government, more job opportunities for women and people from different cultures.
All of the students demonstrated some understanding of the term ‘lifelong learning’ stating it was about learning a lesson every day, continuing to learn through life, not stopping once you leave school or university, taking opportunities, and that it never ends despite your age. When asked about transferrable skills, most students were able to provide an explanation. They suggested the following; how the skills you learn in one area can be applied to another, using your skills and putting them towards something else, for example, the science learned in nursing could be applied to computer engineering in terms of computer skills and thinking skills, and another student gave the example of the police and the armed forces requiring similar physical requirements. The Careers Advisors again provided a range of explanations from a quite simplistic view that you never stop learning, through to more complex explanations including gaining skills, knowledge or experience throughout your life and sometimes that is through doing a formal qualification, sometimes through the job you do and sometimes through experiences you go through in your life.

The student participants had mixed responses on whether they had been consulted, with many stating they did not get to choose what they wanted and that the school told them what they had to do via surveys, subject advice and so on. Careers Advisors were asked whether students should be consulted about what they require from careers education and guidance and most said that students should be consulted but they also suggested parents need to be consulted and that students often did not know what they needed.

Finally, the Careers Advisors were asked if they thought the Ministry of Education handbook published in 2003 and revised in 2008 was relevant and helpful to students today in terms of careers education and guidance. They were also asked about the delivery modes and what students received in their school. The responses were mixed with some Careers Advisors
using the handbook regularly while others had not consulted it for some time. Some thought the booklet was helpful while others challenged the validity of school-wide careers education being delivered by all teaching staff, as opposed to specialists who are trained and qualified in career development.

**IMPLICATIONS**

This research has identified that students require a multi-dimensional approach to careers education and guidance which encompasses all of their life situations and experiences, their beliefs, values, interests, family circumstances and maturity or readiness to engage. Each student should be treated as an individual to gain participation and buy-in and to ensure relevancy and ownership by the student, which suggests the process must start by asking the student what they want and need from careers education and guidance, from Year 9 and progressing through to Year 13. Students in the study felt the careers education they received was often just about subject choices and how those linked to tertiary study options and the Careers Advisors confirmed this was a key role. This may suggest the curriculum related to careers education is not being delivered in some schools and that the handbook is being largely ignored. Family involvement is a critical part of the decision making process so schools may need to educate and involve parents far more in the careers education and guidance process in the future to ensure good outcomes for students. The study also raised the fact that mature family friends can positively influence students, especially those working in a career field in the area the student is interested in pursuing.

It also shows that students prefer a hands-on practical approach to learning about and researching career options and this is best achieved by having the school arrange workplace visits and allowing students to experience first-hand the working environment, being able to
ask questions of those currently in the roles of interest, being able to explore the wider field of careers associated with that industry and getting a genuine taste of what it would be like to work in that career. This could be achieved by changing the way Gateway is structured to allow all senior students this opportunity but with less days away from school and run as more of a taster experience, or by widening the scope of Work Choice Day and other industry and tertiary experience days to include all students in senior school. Failing this, a more technological approach could be adopted by schools to show podcasts of people working and being interviewed about their career, showing DVDs and inviting a wider selection of employers and workers from all areas of industry and training organisations to talk at assemblies, Dean’s meetings and at lunchtime seminars. Currently the focus seems to be heavily weighted towards university students visiting at assemblies and study options available at university, which is clearly not inclusive of all student needs.

This study also suggests that university liaison staff may be too generalist and brief in their presentations to students and that specialists from each faculty might be required to attend, to ensure students select appropriate papers, meet postgraduate pre-requisites, help with degree structuring and provide more in-depth knowledge of how each university works in regards to enrolment, timetabling and so on. The students in the study suggested current open days do not address these concerns and are lacking in depth in regard to the mechanics of selecting and building an appropriate degree, how to enrol and so on. The students suggested running more ‘student for a day’ programmes where they could sit in on lectures, speak to current students and lecturers, and meet with a faculty course advisor and bring their parents to that meeting. They implied that parents and Careers Advisors were not able to help them structure their degrees and that both needed more training and information to be of any use to the students. There may therefore be an opportunity for tertiary institutes to do more to address
these concerns. Given the substantial student loans accrued during a course of study, it is important that students make well-informed decisions before commencing their study, to avoid unnecessary additional costs associated with a change of degree or major. There are economic and social costs attached to student debt which impact both on the individual and society so this is a very serious issue.

The research findings also suggest that there is room for improvement with the current handbook which does not provide curriculum-based examples and advice on how to implement the suggestions and theory offered, and with no solutions on how this should be staffed or funded. The authors did not consult students and parents, yet the findings of this research and that of others, demonstrates the importance of doing so, to ensure relevancy and buy-in by the students and to support parental knowledge and understanding. A study was undertaken in Scotland to get students’ views of the guidance system to prove that student voice could add value and it showed that they have the capacity to contribute in a meaningful way and that their perspective can be different from that of teachers and therefore essential (Howieson & Semple, 2000). Vaughan (2003) refers to the “overseas research which has highlighted mismatches between policy and young people’s experiences” (p. 5) within careers education and guidance. The literature suggests students are rarely consulted as a stakeholder group and careers education is just ‘done’ to students for their own good, with the assumption made that experts within the wider education field ‘know best’, in what is a very hierarchical system of decision making related to education policy and guidelines, funding and delivery (Brooker & MacDonald, 1999; Levin, 2000; Vaughan, 2003). Failure to appreciate the deeper meanings of events and young people’s frames of reference, particularly those who are socially excluded or subject to intervention, can have catastrophic consequences for the individual and ultimately their community (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).
For young people to realise their full working potential which is linked to future economic and social outcomes, appropriate careers education and guidance is important (Horne, 2010; Vaughan, 2003). Unemployment, crime, incarceration and mental illness are often associated with youth who are disengaged at school and lost in transition (Watts, 2001). Governments around the world are concerned with young people referred to as NEET status – Not in Education, Employment or Training - as the economic and social costs for this disengagement are high (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Watts, 2001). A recent New Zealand study shows that careers education is targeted at certain groups and is more about intervention for at-risk young people rather than careers education for all (Vaughan, 2008). The majority of Maori and Pasifika students but less than half of the Pakeha/NZ European and Asian students in Vaughan’s study reported finding their time with the Careers Educator helpful (Vaughan, 2008). This finding is mirrored in overseas research and there are now moves afoot to provide careers development for all students and to measure the effectiveness of this as part of a school’s performance review (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009; Hassel, 2009).

It is therefore critical to ask and hear from students to help career educators and policymakers understand from the students’ perspectives what they need to navigate a very complex and dynamic environment where they are expected to make important academic and career choices as teenagers, to conform to government, school and parental expectations. Vaughan (2008) suggests we need to support Careers Advisors in New Zealand secondary schools to do something differently in preparing young people to think about life beyond school. Her latest research findings demonstrate “a lack of consistency across students’ formal careers education experiences and careers staff ability to provide careers education consistent with career development and management” (p. 66) which means students may struggle to
understand the shifts between traditional linear careers approaches and the new emergent career trends (Vaughan, 2008). Similar findings have been reported in California, with careers education policy being open to different interpretation and implementation across schools there (de Cos, Chan & Salling, 2009). Vaughan (2008) asserts a useful change could be in helping students to construct their careers in relation to their lives, to equip them with skills to engage in lifelong learning and to help them navigate both predictable and unpredictable career changes, flexible working conditions, skill portability and transferability. This might suggest that policymakers and those leading careers education and guidance at the Ministry of Education and in secondary schools may need to take a new approach.

This also raises a question around the profession as many Careers Advisors are not qualified within the field of work in which they are practicing, having moved out of classroom teaching or some other area like guidance and into careers education, yet it is different from traditionally taught subjects and possesses highly complicated theory based curriculum. One student refers to her frustration with the Careers Advisor’s lack of knowledge, stating she wished she could have had a decent conversation with someone experienced in the careers field. The Careers Advisor demographic information also demonstrates this with only three of the eight Careers Advisors participating in this research having completed professional qualifications within careers development and education. The handbook suggests Careers Advisors could “undertake specialised training in guidance and counselling and gain formal qualifications as part of their professional development” (Careers Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2008, p. 25). Dale Furbish who heads the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) career development postgraduate programme concurs with this, referring to Careers Scotland who with the support of the Scottish government, have made it mandatory for all Careers Practitioners to complete a postgraduate career guidance
qualification. He suggests this would raise the professionalism of Careers Advisors in New Zealand and comments on this in a recent publication which examines the issue (Career Edge, 2010). Perhaps secondary school principals and boards will need to address this in the future to ensure the best outcomes possible for the students in their care. The Ministry of Education, and Careers and Transition Educators (CATE), the professional body which represents Careers Advisors in New Zealand may also need to re-examine this situation.

The handbook also implies that careers education and guidance can be delivered by anyone and does not require specialist knowledge. The researcher’s findings support the literature which suggests that specialist knowledge is essential to delivering effective education and guidance and that those Careers Advisors currently practicing without the appropriate professional qualifications were unable to demonstrate the depth of understanding required to teach essential theory and concepts to ensure students can navigate the complex and ever-changing world of work landscape. Also classroom teachers who have not experienced work outside of a classroom may not be well equipped to provide appropriate and meaningful careers advice to students. Perhaps the time has come to place more status on Careers Advisors and the work they do, to make it compulsory to hold a curriculum-based professional qualification as in all other areas of the teaching profession and to allocate more funding and curriculum time to careers education as an essential part of schooling today. It may be possible to offer this qualification as a university degree and then as part of a secondary teacher’s education programme in the future.

Given that a third of the students in the study stated that their religious beliefs influenced their career choices and that New Zealand is a multi-cultural society with many belief systems being practiced, perhaps this needs more prominence in the handbook. Instead it is
not mentioned specifically in the diagram which shows the layers that influence students’ career decisions and could be placed under family or community, but this is not clear, with a brief mention in the text below the diagram of how values can impact on work choice. This should be of particular concern to policymakers in New Zealand due the large number of Pasifika peoples who live in Auckland and who are mostly deeply religious. The Australian model from which the diagram was developed may not reflect this aspect of our society accurately enough. If students had been consulted, this deficiency may well have been highlighted, as it has been in my study.

There may need to be a greater emphasis on professional development for Careers Advisors in the areas of theory, delivery of the curriculum, professional supervision, the development of common resources, and student assessments to measure the effectiveness of careers education, to ensure all students are receiving consistent and current careers education and guidance across all New Zealand secondary schools. Overseas researchers also want to ensure careers education consistency for all students and are proposing measures which examine career readiness of students against benchmarked indicators, with schools being ranked accordingly (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Hassel, 2009). Hassel (2009) also suggests that schools could work together to create shared resources using an on-line repository system with the creation of materials and professional development aligned to common college and career-ready standards, to aid consistent delivery of careers education across all schools.

This will require a new approach to careers education which moves away from the skills-matched linear careers model with counselling, and towards an individual approach which consults and involves the student in a narrative approach and traverses a dynamic, ever-
changing model which equips students with the knowledge to manage their own careers, understand the world of work today and to become resilient change managers and lifelong learners. Patton and McMahon (2006) assert that career counselling needs to change to be more relevant, moving towards constructivist approaches which focus on all aspects of the whole individual and moving away from the counsellor as expert and towards a more narrative approach where the student creates their personal story and the counsellor helps facilitate. The challenge is to find a middle ground which allows for the consultation and empowerment of students to make informed choices for their futures as individuals, whilst also supporting Careers Advisors, to reflect on the processes and influences affecting youth today and to keep abreast with research and emerging career counselling trends when they are constrained by time, policy and are often isolated within a school environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All students should have the opportunity to attend work experience as part of their career decision making process at school and time should be allocated to key staff to allow for the development and sourcing of such placements
- The senior management team in schools should take more responsibility for careers education by introducing appropriate school structures and processes to support this curriculum
- Deans should also be more proactive in each year level by inviting assembly speakers, both motivational and employment related to help students understand how qualifications and subjects affect future opportunities and regularly discussing the links between school grades, subjects and future career choices
- Parents need more support to help their children make informed career decisions and this could be provided by the school, Career Services Rapuara, tertiary institutes and industry representatives in a co-ordinated and collaborative way.

- Tertiary institutes need to offer more training to Careers Advisors on how to structure degrees and to spend more time in schools helping students to understand the complexities of majors, minors, conjoint degrees, timetabling requirements, postgraduate study requirements and so on.

- Tertiary institutes could also host all students from Year 10 to Year 13 in their city or town, to provide opportunities for students to be inspired and experience tertiary life, to help students set high goals and reach their full career potential.

- A more holistic approach to careers education and guidance will ensure individual ownership and this will require Careers Advisors to be trained in a new delivery style and up-skilled in terms of their knowledge of career theory and practice for today’s global economy and modern youth requirements.

- All Careers Advisors should be required to complete a postgraduate qualification in Careers Development to professionalise the industry and standardise the delivery of careers education and guidance within New Zealand schools.

- The current careers education policy development and curriculum handbook need to be updated by firstly consulting students to ensure relevancy, and then parents and industry to ensure what is being delivered is acceptable and supported by all parties.

- There is an urgent need to provide more explicit resources and curriculum text to ensure consistent careers education delivery across New Zealand schools, and to develop an on-line repository to share resources and provide professional development for Careers Advisors and those teaching within the careers education field.
The current belief that anyone in the teaching profession can deliver careers education, as stated in the handbook, is questionable and should be reconsidered as part of a policy review on careers education; or appropriate careers training offered to all teachers in secondary schools as part of their professional development.

Although careers education is now mandated in schools, it is clear that it needs to be made a compulsory part of the curriculum like English or mathematics to ensure all students receive consistent and full teaching in this essential area.

In order to improve delivery and emphasise the importance of careers education it will be necessary to introduce a system which measures student career readiness across all secondary schools and ranks schools accordingly as part of an annual review process.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The choice of a qualitative approach using three different methods has helped to minimise the weaknesses from a small sample size. The interpretivist approach has allowed the researcher to understand the complexity of the processes and influences involved in students’ career decision making, to examine the relevancy of the current careers education and guidance being delivered in New Zealand secondary schools and to compare the understanding of theory and application of careers education. The study has been strengthened by considering the views of Year 13 students, those two years post-school and Careers Advisors currently working in secondary schools. Because of its small size the study participants were limited to students and Careers Advisors but it would be useful to also investigate these issues in relation to parents who may have a different perspective.

Another limitation was the small number of students in the Year 13 sample due to the difficulty of accessing students at school. A wider sample from more schools might have
added to the discussion findings. However, the Year 13 focus group findings did mirror the Year 13 interviews and helped to widen the sample pool. These samples were also just from two Auckland schools which may have affected the results when compared to rural and other city schools throughout New Zealand. The sample size of the study overall could also have been larger to gain validity and rigour.

A further limitation was the snowball method used to identify students in the post-school sample as they were all studying at The University of Auckland. If the students were working full-time or completing apprenticeships, the data may well have been different from that gathered. The students did however come from secondary schools from around New Zealand which added to the richness of the data produced and widened the scope when compared to the Year 13 sample group who just originated from Auckland schools.

It is also possible the study findings were limited by the fact there was only one male participant in the student sample group.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research did not involve parents and it would be useful to explore what parents and families believe are the determining factors involved in their children’s career decision making, how they view the world of work today and what they understand by lifelong learning and other careers theory. It would then be possible to make a more informed decision on what schools could provide to educate parents to assist their children to make appropriate career decisions. There appears to be a gap in the literature in regard to this area of research in New Zealand.
It would also be appropriate to expand the sample of Careers Advisors to look more deeply at their qualifications and experience, to see if a larger group returned the same survey results in regard to knowledge around career theory and individualised careers education and to then examine ways to up-skill all Careers Advisors with a professional qualification if the results supported this.

Further research could also be conducted with school boards and principals to examine their knowledge and understanding of careers education and guidance and how this links to future employability for students, which has social, economic and political costs for their community and the country. Governments around the world are concerned with young people referred to as NEET status – Not in Education, Employment or Training - as the economic and social costs for this disengagement are high and appropriate careers education is therefore essential for all students (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Watts, 2001).

Further research could be done with a wider pool of secondary school students to include more males and year levels as it would be interesting to explore how much careers education and theory is actually being offered at each year level in schools throughout New Zealand and what students take from it in terms of understanding and application to their own lives.

A wider pool of post-school students would add to the knowledge-base in terms of including more males in the sample and a broader range of destinations such as entry-level jobs, apprenticeships, polytechnic study and unemployment to investigate if the careers education and guidance each student received at school affected their decision making (or lack thereof) and whether the advice was effective.
Further research could also be conducted to look at the effectiveness of tertiary liaison visits and open days to see if what is being offered could be improved to ensure students are making informed decisions on degrees, majors, minors, and postgraduate study options before they enrol and start accruing debt through student loans. There appears to be a gap in the literature in this field of study.

The research could be extended to investigate what Deans, form teachers and subject teachers understand in terms of careers education and theory, what they know about careers within their subject area and whether they feel qualified to offer advice to students. The results of this research may encourage the Ministry of Education to rethink a school-wide approach to careers education and guidance as suggested in the handbook, or to offer careers-based professional development to all teaching staff.

The *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2008) handbook appears to have many gaps and it would be useful to consult students and parents as stakeholders to examine what they need in terms of relevant and current careers education, and to ask Careers Advisors if what is provided in the handbook is appropriate and adequate to implement a school-wide careers education programme, to inform future policy, curriculum development and funding in this area.

It might also be useful to explore what careers resources are currently available within secondary schools and whether it would be feasible to set up an on-line shared repository system based on best practice and curriculum standards to aid in a more consistent delivery of careers education across schools.
Research which benchmarked and examined systems for measuring the effectiveness of careers education with students and ways of ranking schools accordingly would also be useful to inform future policy in this vital delivery area.

It would be useful to conduct further research into the effectiveness of work experience programmes such as Gateway linking to career making decisions and to examine how this programme, or something similar, could be extended to all senior students, as this was overwhelmingly the single most important careers education requirement raised in this study but very few students had access to work experience through existing school programmes.

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

This research adds to the body of literature on careers education and guidance in New Zealand by asking the students themselves what it is they want and need to make informed career decisions, as their voice has not been heard. It is hoped future policy and curriculum development within this area will now include students as a stakeholder group as this study demonstrates the importance of consultation and the rich insights offered by the student body, to whom careers education and guidance has just been ‘done to them for their own good’ with no input until now. For students to be ready for tomorrow they must be able to use their minds and their hands, be problem solvers, think critically, analyse data and communicate effectively and the best way to achieve this is through authentic work placements linked to rigorous academic learning and holistic careers education (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009).
The challenge for policymakers, educationalists and employers is to ensure the careers education and guidance students receive during school meets these requirements in order to allow youth to reach their full career potential and thereby contribute fully to society.

So, finally, I pose the question “Is this not the most important curriculum area and what will be done to address the current disparities of careers education in New Zealand secondary schools?”
REFERENCES


Careers Advisors Questionnaire for Master’s thesis

1. How long have you been working as a Careers Advisor and what qualifications do you have in careers education?
__________________________________________________________________________________

2. How long have you been working in your current school?
__________________________________________________________________________________

3. What percentage of your hours are spent working as a Careers Advisor as opposed to teaching?
   25% ________  50% ________  75% ________  100% ________

4. Are you the only person in your department, or do you work as part of a team? Explain who else works with you and their roles and hours.
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

5. Do you believe that the careers information being provided to students is sufficient for them to make informed decisions about their future careers and training? Explain why or why not.
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
6. What additional information and experiences would you provide if time and funding was available?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
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7. What or whom do you think has the most influence on what students select for their future career upon leaving school? Please rank each line.

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<th>No influence</th>
<th>Some influence</th>
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<td>Friends/Peers</td>
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<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
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<td>Careers Advisor</td>
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<td>Dean</td>
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<td>Media/TV/Magazines</td>
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<td>Sports Coach</td>
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Other:
__________________________________________________________________________________
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8. How would you describe the term 'career' based on your knowledge of current trends?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

9. Have you heard of the term 'lifelong learning'? What does it mean to you and how do you explain this concept to students?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

10. Do you believe the MOE 'Career Education and Guidelines Booklet', released in 2008 is relevant and helpful to students today? If yes, please explain why, if no, please explain how it could be improved or updated.

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

11. Do you think students should be consulted about what they require from careers education and guidance? Please explain your answer.

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire to assist me with my master’s degree thesis. I trust the results will be valuable to the professional body of careers advisors. I hope to present my findings at the 2011 CATE Conference. Chris Basham.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 4041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
INFORMATION SHEET FOR CAREERS ADVISORS

Title of Thesis:

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

My name is Christine Basham and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology. I would like to seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to investigate the processes and influences involved in students’ experiences of career decision making in Year 13 and two years post-secondary school. It will also examine students’ perceptions of the relevance of current careers education and guidance being delivered in secondary schools and will then examine what careers advisors think the processes and influences of students’ career decision making involves.

You are invited to participate in a short questionnaire which will help to identify themes and issues around this important topic. I will need to ask you to sign a consent form and will be seeking permission from your Principal as well.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis and your questionnaire results will be coded to ensure anonymity. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology, Dr Jenny Collins. She may be contacted by phone on (09) 815 4321 ext 8369 or email jcollins@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Christine Basham

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This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM – Careers Advisors

TO: [participant’s name]
FROM: Christine Basham
RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: (title of project)

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript (or summary of findings if appropriate) for checking before data analysis is started and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to the stage when analysis of data has been completed.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 4041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Focus Group Interview Questions for Yr 13 Students

1. What does the term ‘career’ mean to you? [Prompts: job, professional, getting paid well, degree, trade, working up the ladder]

2. What steps are you taking to prepare for your future career?

3. What career support are you receiving – at school – elsewhere?

4. Who or what has the most influence on your choice of career?

5. Is this helpful? Why? Why not?

6. What guidance/support would be useful for you as you make decisions about your future career?

7. Have you ever been asked by the school what advice and careers education you want and need?

8. Do you feel confident that you can make an informed decision about your future career and training based on the information you have received from school? Explain.

9. What stands out as most useful when making your decisions?

10. What else would you have liked to know or experience?

11. Who has influenced your subject and career decisions the most? [Prompts: parents, friends, teachers, Careers Advisor, Dean, media, coach, church leader]

12. Do you expect to have one career or many careers during your lifetime? Explain.

13. Have you heard of the term ‘lifelong learning’? What does it mean to you?

14. Do you think the job market has changed when compared to your parents or grandparents’ day? Explain.
INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS – Focus group and interview

Hi. My name is Christine Basham and I am currently enrolled in a Master's degree programme which requires me to talk to students about their experience of using the careers advisors service. If you are aged 18 years or over and are willing to talk about your experiences I will need to ask you to sign a consent form. The Principal has already given me permission to approach the Careers Advisor who has nominated you as someone who may be prepared to participate. I will work with the first eight students who let the Careers Advisor know they are interested.

We will start with a focus group where we will meet with a small group of Year 13 students from your school to share your experiences. The session will be taped so I can analyse it later for my study. The group will be asked to keep the proceedings confidential. The report will not identify the school or any individual student's as I use coding, not names to identify who says what. The focus group interview will take an hour and I will work through the Careers Advisor to select a date, time and venue at school.

Based on what you raise as a group, I may also ask you to take part in a 1:1 interview with me to look more deeply at some of the things you are impressed by or think are lacking in the current service. Again I will need you to sign a consent form and I will record what you share with me. This information will also be confidential and coded so you and your school cannot be identified. The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet after the study is completed. The interview will take up to an hour and will be conducted at a time and place that you nominate, in discussion with the Careers Advisor.

I hope that you will agree to take part and if you have any questions you can email me on c.basham@auckland.ac.nz.

If you have any queries about the project, you may also contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology, Dr Jenny Collins. She may be contacted by phone on (09) 815 4321 ext 8369 or email jcollins@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Christine Basham

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM – Students

TO:

FROM: Christine Basham

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE:

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don’t have to be part of this if I don’t want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

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

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

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

Student Name: ____________________________________________

Signed: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

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Year 13 Students 1:1 interviews

1. How long have you attended this school?
2. Do you know the Careers Advisor? [Prompt: name, where located, assembly]
3. How much time have you spent with your careers advisor during your schooling?
4. Have you done any classroom based careers education? What year (s), with whom, what did you learn?
5. What does the term ‘career’ mean to you? [Prompts: job, professional, getting paid well, degree, trade, working up the ladder]
6. Do you feel confident that you can make an informed decision about your future career and training based on the information you received from school? Explain.
7. Have you ever been asked by the school what advice and careers education you want and need?
8. What stood out as most useful when you were making your decisions?
9. What else would you have liked to know or experience?
10. Who influenced your subject and career decisions the most? [Prompts: parents, friends, teachers, Careers Advisor, Dean, media, coach, church leader]
11. Do you expect to have one career or many careers during your lifetime? Explain.
12. Have you heard of the term ‘lifelong learning’? What does it mean to you?
13. Do you think the job market has changed when compared to your parents or grandparents’ day? Explain.

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INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS – interview only

Hi. My name is Christine Basham and I am currently enrolled in a Master’s degree programme which requires me to talk to students about their experience of using the careers advisors service. If you are aged 18 years or over and are willing to talk about your experiences I will need to ask you to sign a consent form. The Principal has already given me permission to approach the Year 13 Dean who has nominated you as someone who may be prepared to participate. I will work with the first three students who tell the Dean they are interested.

You will take part in a 1:1 interview with me to look at some of the things you are impressed by or think are lacking in the current careers service. The interview will take approximately an hour and I will work through the Dean to select a date, time and venue at school which suits you. The session will be taped so I can analyse it later for my study. You will be asked to keep the proceedings confidential. The report will not identify the school or any individual student’s as I use coding, not names to identify who says what.

The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet after the study is completed. The interview will take up to an hour and will be conducted at a time and place that you nominate at school.

I hope that you will agree to take part and if you have any questions you can email me on c.basham@auckland.ac.nz.

If you have any queries about the project, you may also contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology, Dr Jenny Collins. She may be contacted by phone on (09) 815 4321 ext 8369 or email jcollins@unitec.ac.nz.

Yours sincerely

Christine Basham

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

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CONSENT FORM – Students

TO:

FROM: Christine Basham

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE:

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don’t have to be part of this if I don’t want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

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

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

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

Student Name:_______________________________________

Signed: ____________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

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Students two years post school 1:1 interviews

1. Which secondary school did you attend and how long were you there for?
2. Do you recall who the careers advisor was?
3. How much time did you spend with the careers advisor during school?
4. Did you do any classroom based careers education? What year (s), with whom, what do you recall learning?
5. What does the term ‘career’ mean to you?
6. Did you feel confident that you could make an informed decision about your future career and training based on the information you received at school? Explain.
7. Were you ever asked by the school what advice and careers education you wanted and needed?
8. Who influenced your subject and career decisions the most?
9. What stood out as most useful when you were making your decisions for career and/or future study?
10. On reflection based on where you are now, did you make the right decision?
11. Looking back, what else would you have liked to know or experience that may have enhanced your decision making process?
12. Do you expect to have one career or many careers during your lifetime? Explain.
13. Have you heard of the term ‘lifelong learning’? What does it mean to you?
14. Do you think the job market has changed when compared to your parents or grandparents’ day? Explain.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS TWO YEARS POST SCHOOL

Hi. My name is Christine Basham and I am currently enrolled in a Master’s degree programme which requires me to talk to students about their experience of using the careers advisors service. I have asked your old school to identify students who may be interested in participating. You will need to be two years out of school and willing to talk about your experiences during school and up to the present time. You will be asked to sign a consent form as part of this process.

I would like to invite you to take part in a 1:1 interview with me to look at some of the things you were impressed by or think were lacking in the careers advisors service. I will record what you share with me so I can analyse it later for my study. This information will be confidential and coded so you and your old school cannot be identified. The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet after the study is completed. The interview will take up to an hour and will be conducted at a time and place that you nominate.

I hope that you will agree to take part and look forward to hearing from you by email on c.basham@auckland.ac.nz if you are willing to participate or have any questions. I can then arrange when and where we meet and the completion of your consent form.

If you have any queries about the project, you may also contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology, Dr Jenny Collins. She may be contacted by phone on (09) 815 4321 ext 8369 or email jcollins@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Christine Basham

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM – Post School Students

TO:

FROM: Christine Basham

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE:

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don’t have to be part of this if I don’t want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

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

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

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

Student Name:_______________________________________

Signed:  ____________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1041

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 15 April 2010 to 14 April 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Letter of approval by Ethics Committee

Christine Basham
38 Kauri Point Road
Laingholm 0904
West Auckland

29 April 2010

Dear Christine

Your file number for this application: 2010-1041

Title: The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making

Your application for ethics approval has been reviewed by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and has been approved for the following period:

Start date: 15 April 2010
Finish date: 14 April 2011

Please note that:
1. the above dates must be referred to on the information AND consent forms given to all participants
2. you must inform UREC, in advance, of any ethically-relevant deviation in the project. This may require additional approval.

You may now commence your research according to the protocols approved by UREC. We wish you every success with your project.

Yours sincerely

Lyndon Walker
Deputy Chair, UREC

cc: Jenny Collins
     Cynthia Almeida
APPENDIX SIX

Letter Providing School’s Permission to Conduct Research

[School’s letterhead]

Date

Please address letter to: Christine Basham, 38 Kauri Point Rd, Laingholm 0604, West Auckland

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE:

The role of career education and guidance for students in Year 13 and its implications for students’ career decision making.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project and I give permission for research to be conducted in my organisation. I understand that the name of my organisation will not be used in any public reports.

Signature of Principal

Name of Principal