Investigating the perceived benefits and difficulties associated with academic mentoring for Maori students within secondary education in Aotearoa-New Zealand

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Unitec Institute of Technology

2014

ABSTRACT

This study set out to examine the perceived benefits and difficulties associated with academic mentoring for Maori students within secondary education in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

A qualitative methodology was employed for this research, which focused on two mainstream secondary schools. At each school, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the educational leader in charge of the academic mentoring programme, and focus group discussions were undertaken with staff, whanau and Maori Year 12 and 13 students. This study sought to approach the research from a strengths-based perspective, meaning that the schools selected were consistently producing results for Maori students above the national average in their decile range. The data collected were used to identify themes and commonalities across the schools in a cross-school analysis.

The findings indicate a variety of approaches to how academic mentoring can be offered in secondary schools. However, there are commonalities which impact on the perceived benefits and difficulties associated with academic mentoring for Maori students in mainstream secondary settings in Aotearoa-New Zealand. The literature and the data show that academic mentoring is an approach which could assist Maori student achievement if certain conditions exist. These conditions are: supporting Maori student academic decision making with data; including whanau in the implementation and running of the programme; addressing any sustainability issues associated with the programme; and being aware of the cultural pedagogy staff require to educate the whole child. Conversely, a challenge identified is that the experience of academic mentoring for Maori students is dependent on the academic mentor. This means not all teachers are equipped with equal skills when it comes to academic mentoring.

These findings suggest that school leaders need to consider carefully how they will introduce, implement and run such programmes. The academic mentoring programme cannot be an 'add-on'; it must be integrated into a school-wide approach which supports culturally responsive pedagogy based on timely, easy-to-access academic data. The recommendations arising from this study have implications for schools that include: schools having good student data management systems;

schools allocating adequate time to the academic mentoring programme; schools working with staff to make sure they are using culturally-responsive pedagogy; having support available to professionally develop academic mentors; ensuring the mentee groups are of a manageable size; and involving staff, whanau and Maori students in the setting up and development of the academic mentoring programme.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study investigates academic mentoring and its perceived benefits and difficulties for Maori students within secondary education in New Zealand in 2014. It explores why academic mentoring has been offered and how it has been implemented. The study has been conducted to elucidate the perceived outcomes of academic mentoring, with a view to helping educators make informed decisions about how and if it should be developed in the future.

As an educator in a New Zealand secondary school, I have been consistently presented with data, schemes and programmes aimed at improving Maori achievement. Despite this, Maori students in mainstream education in New Zealand are still beset by inequitable outcomes. These inequitable outcomes are highlighted by Mcfarlane (2004) when he comments on Maori students being overly-represented at the negative end of the continuum for achievement statistics, truancy and suspension. These inequitable outcomes at secondary school lead to Maori students leaving school with few or no qualifications and this leads to unemployment, low skilled, low-remunerated work (Sheriff, 2010). The inequitable outcomes in schools have long term implications for the individuals and the country which means the major challenges facing the New Zealand education system today remains the continuing disparities between Pakeha and Maori achievement (Bishop, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Sheriff, 2010). Underachievement for Maori in mainstream education in relation to this thesis refers to poor educational performance, engagement and attendance for Maori students which leads to limited economic success. Unfortunately this is a problem that predates my birth, it is a persistent pattern first discussed in the late 1950s (Hunn, 1960). As a country New Zealand has spent millions of dollars on programmes and projects, trying to address the issue within mainstream secondary schools, with limited success (Bishop, 2012).

There have been many calls, both within and outside educational circles, for the gap in achievement for Maori to be closed and for New Zealand to stop wasting so much human potential (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Collins, 2010). As the gatekeepers to higher education, New Zealand secondary schools are consistently measured on their results and the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) has given

schools the opportunity to provide a number of pathways for students. From 2009-2012 there has been an increase of 19.3% in Maori attaining NCEA Level 2 (Ministry of Education, 2014d). Despite this, Maori students are the least likely to transition directly to tertiary education and they are less likely than their Pakeha peers to succeed at tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2014d). The increase in achievement within schools could be linked to the wide variety of courses and assessment opportunities now being offered in New Zealand mainstream secondary schools (Hipkins, Vaughan, Beals, Ferral, & Gardiner, 2005; Turner, Li, & Yuan, 2008). This increase could, however, be coming with a price as Maori students are more likely to study less 'academic subjects' (e.g. those not recognised by Universities as approved subjects) which do not necessarily reflect their academic abilities and limit their future educational aspirations (Turner et al., 2008).

Completing less academic courses at secondary school limits the opportunities available for students when they leave school. Higher priority needs to be given to providing for students who are culturally diverse. Even academically able students are being diverted into less academic courses to ensure they pass NCEA without thought being given to the limitations being placed on their ability to get a higher education (Bevan Brown, Mc Gee, Ward, & MacIntyre, 2011). These less academic courses are not recognised by tertiary providers and this limits the students choices when they leave school. My experience as a school leader is that despite the programmes, resources and rhetoric surrounding Maori achievement in New Zealand secondary schools, the gains being made are small and are not flowing on to increased educational benefit outside of school for Maori (Bishop, 2012; Madjar, McKinley, Jensen, & van der Merwe, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2014d; Turner et al., 2008). One way being suggested to address this is academic mentoring.

The concept of a mentor has been around since the times of ancient Greece (Walton, 1999). The definition of a mentor is slippery and differs according to the view of the author (Dodgson, 1986). For the purposes of this research mentoring is defined as a way of learning which not only supports but challenges the mentee so that progress is made. This type of relationship is built on trust and it focuses on development (Rymer, 2002). The literature on mentoring in an academic setting provides limited definitions. The idea of academic mentoring has developed over several decades and in many different contexts. I believe it is best defined as, "a complex, interactive process

occurring between individuals of different levels of experience and expertise which incorporates interpersonal or psychosocial, career and or educational development and socialisation functions into the relationship" (Carmin as cited in Carruthers, 1993, pp. 10-11).

Academic mentoring is mentoring which is related to academic progress and achievement. It refers to adults working with students to focus on their academic goals (Hughes & Karp, 2004; McKinley et al., 2009). At times personal issues will need to be worked through to help students make academic progress, but the primary focus of academic mentoring is academic success. These programmes have different titles in different schools. They have become particularly popular in New Zealand schools and have been the focus of media attention (N. Jones, 2014). Academic mentoring is currently being discussed in the media as a possible solution to underachievement, but there has been little research on the impact on Maori students of these programmes.

Thesis Aims and Methodology

Through this research project, I wanted to understand what Maori students' experiences of academic mentoring are and if the outcomes hoped for in setting up these programmes are being realised. I wanted to further the understanding around academic mentoring and to offer findings that may help educational leaders who are considering implementing such a programme to understand what has been successful in other New Zealand secondary schools. I also hoped to hear from staff, Maori students and whanau about the benefits and difficulties that they believe are associated with academic mentoring. Furthermore, I hoped to critically examine whether academic mentoring in New Zealand secondary schools has had any impact on how Maori students and their whanau perceive their involvement in education in the future. This involved trying to understand whether Maori students and their whanau feel that any programme benefits will transfer to higher educational aspirations outside of school. This is an important issue to investigate as Maori students are the least likely in New Zealand to transition directly to tertiary education and they are also less likely to succeed at tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2014d).

This study sought to employ a strengths-based methodological approach, which meant shifting away from deficit thinking and focusing on Maori being successful as Maori (Durie, 2011). Highlighting and listening to staff, Maori students and whanau voice was the basis of the qualitative methodology. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups sought to allow the interviewees to have conversations and make meaning out of their experiences rather than the researcher doing it for them (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). This approach was taken to try to avoid me, as the Pakeha researcher, placing my values and assumptions onto the data and findings.

The thesis presents, from the participants' perspectives, the benefits and difficulties accrued for Maori students who participate in academic mentoring. The participants were selected from two rural co-educational, mainstream, secondary schools. The schools are decile one, with 80% of their students identifying as Maori; and decile six, with 22% of their students identifying as Maori. Participants were well-informed about the aims and methodology of the research before choosing to be involved. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The data were organised into categories before the preliminary findings were shared with the participants for their consideration and the schools consideration.

The following research questions guided this study:

- Why have educational leaders in two secondary schools provided academic mentoring for Maori students?

- How have two secondary schools implemented academic mentoring with Maori students?

- What perceived benefits and difficulties have accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring?

Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is arranged in six chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, provides an overview of why this research is timely in New Zealand and explains the rationale for the research and outlines the research aims and questions. The second chapter reviews the literature and begins with a historical background on Maori education in New Zealand to explain how the present education system has evolved for Maori. It

then discusses the key themes that arise from the literature. These themes are: academic decision making; whanau involvement; sustainability; and educating the whole child. The second chapter discusses the perspectives and findings of various educationalists, authors and researchers.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology and methods of the research in detail. In Chapter Four the data findings are reported. Chapter Five shows the analysis and interpretation of the main findings of the research as they relate to key themes from Chapter Two. The concluding chapter, Chapter Six completes the thesis with the presentation of the five conclusions of the project, a review of the possible limitations of the research and final recommendations with regards to practice and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

It is necessary to consider the history of education for Maori since colonisation as "it would not be difficult to argue that the seeds of Maori underachievement in the modern education system were sown by some of the past education policies" (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999, p. 24). Therefore, the first section of this literature review begins with an overview explaining the ways in which formal education has evolved for Maori since colonisation, beginning with the early mission schools where missionaries provided education. The government-funded Native Schools followed, which were later integrated with the nationally-run public education system.

Considering the background of Maori education illuminates how the underestimation of the academic potential of Maori began and has been sustained (Barrington, 2008). Looking into the background helps us grasp how New Zealand schools were set up as middle-class Pakeha organisations and how, despite many programmes being introduced, Maori students are still experiencing inequitable outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

The historical section considers educational policies which contributed to the negative impact on Maori. Out of these educational policies grew a history of deficit thinking around Maori student achievement (McRae, 2010). In education, deficit thinking is the practice of holding lower expectations for students who do not fit the traditional context of the school system. This led educators to believe that these problems lay with the students or their families, not the teacher or the system (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Since 2002, education policies and programmes have moved to reject deficit thinking (Durie, 2011). Programmes such as *Te Kotahitanga* (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003) have challenged teachers, schools and the system as a whole to allow Maori to achieve as Maori within our secondary schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Educators have started to consider different ways of allowing whanau and Maori students to have a sense of control over their education (Durie, 2011). One of the programmes being suggested by researchers to assist this process is academic mentoring (McKinley et al., 2009).

The review then considers the main themes which arise in the literature concerned with academic mentoring: the problem of academic decision making and how Maori

students are selecting the courses they take; the involvement and influence of whanau in academic mentoring programmes; the sustainability of academic mentoring programmes; and the ways in which academic mentoring can support educating the whole child.

How the Education System has Evolved for Maori

To understand the underachievement of Maori in mainstream education it is necessary to consider the events and policies that have impacted on them since colonisation began. For pre-European Maori, education was not a new concept - they had always embraced knowledge as a way of maintaining mana and improving the quality of their lives (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). Before the arrival of the European there were already established schools of learning, whare wananga, where knowledge was transmitted (Metge, 1980). Certain knowledge was seen as sacred and individuals were selected to attain it because it was believed they would care for it (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). Knowledge was not seen as belonging to an individual. Rather it was about benefiting everyone and being inclusive, cooperative, reciprocal and doing your part for the whanau (The International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education, 2004). When the Europeans arrived history tells us that schooling was something which Maori were responsive to (Penetito, 2011).

In 1816 the first mission school opened in the Bay of Islands. It taught in te reo but the missionaries wanted to create "Brown Britons" (Barrington, 2008, p. 14). This was the basis of the policy of assimilation which was introduced through the Education Ordinance Act in 1847 (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). This Act, along with the Native Schools Act in 1858 (Barrington, 2008), provided the funding for mission schools which became Native Schools. The schools were used as a means of imposing European superiority over knowledge, language and culture; the amount and type of knowledge provided to Maori through schools was tightly controlled to ensure Maori fitted into the role the colonisers had selected for them in society – being members of the labouring class (L. T. Smith, 2012; Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999).

In 1867 a second Native Schools Act (Barrington, 2008) set up a parallel system of schooling. In most cases Maori provided the land and finance for the schools which were administered by the Department of Native Affairs, while schools for Pakeha were

administered by the Department of Education. The structure of the native schools served to continue to promote Pakeha knowledge as more valid and important than Maori knowledge, and the limitation of the curriculum towards educating Maori for working-class employment continued (Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993; Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). One school who fought against this was Te Aute College, a boarding school for Maori boys. In the 1880s Te Aute offered university matriculation to the Maori boys who attended and produced the first wave of Maori university graduates. Unfortunately the school depended on the government to fund most of its students. The government believed that the school needed to offer an agricultural curriculum and when the school refused to comply their funding was removed (Openshaw et al., 1993). The government was making it clear that they did not believe Maori belonged in the educated classes. Instead Maori were to be taught the "dignity of manual labour" (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999, p. 21). The seeds of low educational expectations from teachers and society as a whole towards Maori had been sown and were being carefully tended (Barrington, 2008).

A nationwide policy to discourage, and in some cases ban, te reo being spoken in New Zealand schools began in 1903. This policy, placed alongside the undermining of Maori knowledge and culture in schools, played a major role in the assimilation policy. It was a planned and often physically violent denial of language, culture and knowledge (L. T. Smith, 2012). Despite a change in the 1930s where the Pakeha in charge of education decided traditional Maori myths and legends, arts, crafts and music could be introduced, the assimilation policy and low expectations continued unabated (Barrington, 2008). This was supported by the Director of Education who believed abandonment of the native tongue involved no loss for Maori and, if educated correctly, that they would make good farmers (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974). The Pakeha in control of the education system made decisions about what was 'best' for Maori and saw Maori as a mass group who needed to be treated in the same way. It is from these beliefs that the still much voiced ideas developed in New Zealand - that Maori prefer to be doing things with their hands and that they are good at physical activities. The hidden assumption behind this, of course, is that Maori are not as good at using their brains. Expectations for Maori were academically lower than those held for Pakeha. Assimilation was the espoused goal, but it was assimilation on Pakeha terms and into the class position in the system that Pakeha saw fit.

In the 1960s assimilation was replaced by the term 'integration' and the educational disparity between Maori and Pakeha was officially recognised (Hunn, 1960). Native schools were abolished in 1969 and through the 1970s and 1980s Maoritanga and taha Maori components were introduced to the education curriculum. While there was guidance and support from Maori the content was determined and controlled by Pakeha (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). It was not until the 1980s that kura kaupapa were opened and there was an ongoing strong push, led by Maori, to increase the numbers of speakers of te reo (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). Throughout this time teachers and administrators in New Zealand primary and secondary schools continued the legacy of a limited view of Maori potential with often devastating results for Maori society (Barrington, 2008).

The first strategies to address Maori underachievement were introduced in 1998 (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). They were developed by Te Puni Kokiri (the Ministry for Maori Development which leads Maori Public Policy and advises on policy affecting Maori wellbeing) and the Ministry of Education. These, along with the work of the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop & Berryman, 2006), began to challenge the attitude so prevalent in New Zealand society that Maori needed to be 'fixed' so they could achieve in the education system (L. T. Smith, 2012). Te Puni Kokiri began advocating for Maori potential to be recognised, rather than the focus being on deficit thinking (Penetito, 2011). Bishop and Berryman (2006) asked teachers to really think about how they viewed Maori students – that is, to stop viewing Maori students as a group and to recognise them as individuals, acknowledge that there are lots of ways to be Maori, and to accept that being Maori is a difference that is a strength.

Research has shown that teachers' assumptions around Maori achievement were still low in New Zealand after the turn of the century (Durie, 2011). As a result of past educational policies Maori had been affected in the following ways: traditional knowledge and methods of teaching had been undermined; career options had been limited; a resistance and negativity to school had developed; educational goals had been lowered; manual labour had been accepted as a natural vocation; and teacher expectations of Maori achievement had been lowered (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). To change this educators are now being challenged to confront their

assumptions and to share control in the classroom (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011). To do this there needs to be a close alignment between whanau, students and teachers to develop personalised programmes of learning which combine the goals of whanau and students to help Maori students achieve their potential (Durie, 2011; Madjar et al., 2009).   Unfortunately this alignment between school and home is not occurring widely and this means Maori students' backgrounds are being 'bypassed' rather than being incorporated into their education.

Despite the challenges, data, schemes and programmes aimed at improving Maori achievement, Maori students in mainstream education in New Zealand still face inequitable outcomes. The major challenge facing the New Zealand education system today remains the continuing disparity between Pakeha and Maori achievement (Bishop, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Sheriff, 2010). As a country, New Zealand has spent millions of dollars on programmes and projects, trying to address this issue within secondary schools with limited success (Bishop, 2012).

Inequitable Educational Outcomes Persist

There have been many calls, both within and outside educational circles, for the gap in achievement for Maori to be closed and for New Zealand to stop wasting so much human potential (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Collins, 2010). As the gatekeepers to higher education, New Zealand secondary schools are consistently measured on their results and the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) has given schools the opportunity to provide a number of pathways for students. From 2009-2012 there has been an increase of 19.3% in Maori attaining NCEA Level 2. Despite this Maori students are the least likely to transition directly to tertiary education and they are still well behind their Pakeha peers with 56.5% of Maori attaining NCEA Level 2 in 2011 compared with 75.9% of Pakeha (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

While Maori student achievement has shown some improvement, the gap between Maori and non-Maori gaining University Entrance has widened (Education Review Office, 2010). Reports continue to highlight the need for secondary schools to engage positively with Maori students and their whanau so they can learn and succeed as Maori (Te Puni Kokiri, 2010).   Unfortunately evidence would suggest that many

teachers still disregard how important culture is. Bishop and Berryman (2006) found that "structural and systemic issues were identified by the teachers as having the least influence on Maori students' educational achievement. These included differing values between the school and the homes of the students (p.258). This suggests that teachers are not questioning how their values may be different to their Maori students and that assimilation is still part of their agenda.

While assimilation is still on the agenda for secondary education, Maori continue to struggle in many facets of life in New Zealand. Statistics show that Maori are disproportionately unemployed, in low paying employment or are incarcerated (Department of Corrections, 2013; Department of Labour, 2012). This is disappointing considering that the Ministry of Education have introduced a number of programmes, such as *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2013) and *He Kakano* (Ministry of Education, 2014a) to try to address the ongoing gap in achievement for Maori learners (Baber, 2012). It would seem that it is time to consider that the issue cannot be addressed by thinking of Maori as one group. Lawrence (2011) points out, that when working with Maori students teachers "need to understand there is no list of strategies" (p.37), which will ensure success for all Maori students.

Maori children are no more all the same than Pakeha children. Treating all Maori children the same is an attempt, intentionally or unintentionally, to assert the dominant culture and ignore the different outlooks of Maori (Mcfarlane, 2004). Too many teachers think that treating students the same way provides equal opportunities when all students have different needs and need to be treated differently (Petty, 2009). Teachers need to challenge themselves and their thinking around Maori students and their expectations for Maori students, not just in the classroom but also in the way that they convey suggestions about subject selections and goals for the future. Common practice is not the same as best practice (Petty, 2009).

It has been suggested that Maori students are more likely to make poor subject choices at secondary school, choices that do not necessarily reflect their academic abilities (Turner et al., 2008). There also seems to be a strong link here to the historical view that Maori were best suited to do the vocational subjects, those that would help them with careers in farming. The wide variety of choices and assessment

opportunities being offered to Maori students were mainly in the vocational areas and this could be linked to the ingrained low expectations held by teachers in regards to Maori students' academic abilities (Barrington, 2008; Hipkins et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2008).

One approach being suggested to address Maori underachievement in secondary schools is academic mentoring (Turner et al., 2008). However, there is little research in New Zealand on academic mentoring for secondary students (McKinley et al., 2009) despite the fact that it is an intervention that has become increasingly popular (Larose et al., 2012).   A. A. Smith (2007) suggests that in contemporary literature a mentor is defined as someone who offers advice, support and guidance to a mentee. Mentoring is a way of learning which not only supports but challenges the mentee so that progress is made. This type of relationship is built on trust and it focuses on development (Rymer, 2002). The table below taken from A. A. Smith (2007) summarises much of the literature around the roles and tasks of the mentor.

Table 2.1: A summary of the literature: The roles and tasks of the mentor

A mentor is a/an...	A mentor ...
* Advisor * Catalyst/enabler * Critical friend * Guide * Listener * Role model * Sounding board * Strategist * Supporter * Tactician * Teacher	* Asks questions * Challenges productively * Encourages risk-taking * Helps identify goals * Listens actively * Offers encouragement * Promotes independence * Provides feedback * Shares critical knowledge

(Source: Smith, 2007, p. 278),

Academic mentoring is mentoring which is related to academic matters such as subject choice, academic goal setting and academic support. It is a relatively new idea. However, Parsloe (1992) offers a useful definition when he discusses mentoring as being an approach to help and support people to manage their own learning so they can maximise their potential, skills, and performance. In New Zealand schools it refers to adults (usually teachers) mentoring students, specifically around their academic goals and pathways while at and beyond school (Hughes & Karp, 2004; McKinley et al., 2009). Schools give these programmes many different titles but there

has been little research about the impact of the programmes on the achievement of Maori students in New Zealand secondary schools.

Despite the suggestion that an academic mentor could offer some solutions, a number of studies suggest that students receive little help of this type and this makes their educational planning haphazard (Mau, 1995; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007). Academic mentoring is an intervention that has become increasingly popular in education. Larose et al. (2012) examined the impact academic mentoring has on young people and their parents involvement in their education. It has been picked up by the media as a possible solution to the gap in achievement in New Zealand secondary schools (N. Jones, 2014). The research which is available highlights some themes which could help us understand academic mentoring and its perceived benefits. These themes are: academic decision making; whanau involvement; sustainability; and educating the whole child.

Academic Decision Making

In their research Wylie and Hipkins (2006) examine whether when the *National Certificate in Educational Achievement* (NCEA) was introduced in 2002 it met the promise of providing more flexibility in regard to the combinations of subjects that students could select and the ability of schools to better meet individual learning needs . NCEA is a system that is both complex and flexible, and secondary schools play a strong role in directing students into the courses they take (Madjar et al., 2009). Secondary schools offer extremely varied courses in their attempts to meet their students' needs (Hipkins, Vaughan, Beales, & Ferral, 2004). Unfortunately, this could be seen as a politically correct way to stream students – that is, to place them into groupings based on perceived academic ability (Hipkins et al., 2005). This assessment of ability is based on Pakeha perceptions and could be a way of continuing the limited vision the New Zealand education system had for Maori from colonial days.

There is evidence to suggest that Maori students, especially those at low decile schools, select or are guided into 'less academic' courses (Madjar et al., 2009). 'Academic' in this sense refers to courses that allow students to follow pathways which

lead to higher education. Not taking these 'academic' courses leads to lower overall attainment and limits students' future choices. An example of this would be having the ability to go onto tertiary or university study.

Students often find it difficult to see the long term implications of their subject choices; while a high proportion of Maori students aspire to University Entrance qualifications, a much lower proportion gain it (Madjar et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2014b). If teachers' assumptions around Maori achievement are still low, then the advice they are giving may convey these low expectations.

Teachers need to set high expectations for Maori students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). It has been suggested that teachers who communicate low expectations create a negative impact (Durie, 2011; Meyer, Weir, McClure, Walkey, & McKenzie, 2009). These studies, however, focus on what happens once courses have been selected. It is interesting to consider the damage being done in secondary schools through the messages Maori students are receiving about teachers' expectations of them through the courses they are guided into. It may be that a lack of adequate guidance or academic mentoring is disadvantaging Maori students who are placed in options and pathways that allow them to gain NCEA credits, but do not allow them to achieve high academic goals, such as Merit and Excellence grades in tertiary approved subjects (Madjar et al., 2009). Hipkins et al. (2005) found that most Year 11 Deans (teachers who oversee the pastoral care of Year 11 students) focused on encouraging students to choose subjects that they would find enjoyable as they believed this would make the students more successful in that class. Future plans were not seen as the most important factor. The long term impact of these decisions was not being considered. As a result students often discover in Year 13 that the decision made in Year 11 not to continue with a subject means they cannot gain entrance to a tertiary course they would like to study. The subject may have been discontinued because it was difficult and not 'fun', without the long term implications being considered.

Decisions about subject choices have compounding effects on students subsequent options (Hipkins et al., 2005). Maori students tend to do less academic subjects and complete fewer credits from the approved list of subjects for university entrance (Madjar et al., 2009). Gaining NCEA credits is highly valued and there is not enough

consideration being given to future plans. Schools need to consider whether or not they are doing enough to help Maori students reach their potential, rather than giving messages that reinforce the history of deficit thinking around Maori student achievement (McRae, 2010). It could be argued that secondary schools have become very focused on ensuring that students are seen to succeed, rather than setting high expectations that promote academic excellence and the opportunity for entry into university. Having students gain credits is more important than challenging students to do courses that will academically extend them. Secondary schools may be more concerned with their own agendas and their positions on league tables, rather than addressing their deficit theorising and setting high expectations for Maori students. Selecting university-approved subjects in Year 11 has been shown to be strongly associated with the likelihood of gaining University Entrance, even for students who are not high achievers (Madjar et al., 2009). Educators need to set high goals for Maori students; just attending school is not enough.

Participation at school is an important step towards realising educational potential, but is not the endpoint (Durie, 2011). To offer the type of advice required to set high expectations there will need to be a positive relationship between the teacher and the student - aspirations will need to overlap and a personal connection made (Durie, 2011). The positive effects of academic mentoring can only be maintained if the mentoring is ongoing (Hughes & Karp, 2004). It is also important to look closely at the programmes that are being offered, not all of them are meaningful or successful (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Academic mentoring must be informed through high quality data management and analysis to create meaningful conversations with students about their academic goals (McKinley et al., 2009). A high quality mentoring programme may even lead to students understanding their teachers' expectations better and spending more time outside the classroom on academic issues (Larose et al., 2012). Secondary schools in New Zealand need to be able to identify the critical times when Maori students can fall behind and offer them well-informed advice which promotes students reaching their potential rather than just doing enough (Madjar et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2009).

Many Maori parents are positive about the advice and strategies used to motivate their children at school. However, the complexities of the NCEA system and socio-

economic issues mean that many parents rely heavily on schools and teachers to guide their students in course selection (Madjar et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2009). Durie (2011) suggests that the connection between whanau and school provides an area where Maori potential could be advanced in a positive way. If the school and whanau could share positive aspirations, attitudes and goals for students, success could easily follow. This means the involvement of whanau in academic mentoring must be considered if Maori students are to gain advancement in education (Kensington-Miller, 2010).

Whanau Involvement

Maori parents value education (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011). Maori students receive encouragement and interest in their schooling from their parents, and students report that their parents encourage them to stay at school (Te Puni Kokiri Ministry of Maori Development, 1994). Durie (2011) found that Maori learners and their whanau were articulate, mindful and concerned about learning and how important education is to students' futures. Whanau want the best for their children.

Maori are achieving at a higher level under the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) (Parata, 2013). However, Maori students are not only more likely to leave school early, they are three times more likely to be stood-down, suspended, excluded or expelled and four times more likely to truant frequently than Pakeha students (Durie, 2011). Therefore they are less likely to achieve highly because of their absences from school and their lack of engagement. Furthermore, Maori still have the lowest scores at Level 2 NCEA for any ethnic group reported on in New Zealand and they are still the least likely to leave school with an NCEA Level 2 qualification which will inhibit their ability to continue to tertiary study because it is the minimum qualification required (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

While Maori parents feel that NCEA has allowed their children to demonstrate achievement better than the previous examination oriented system, they believe more needs to be done to promote parent understanding of NCEA and the limitations that some courses can place on students' futures (Meyer et al., 2009). The implications of NCEA are still not clear to many parents and this is particularly true for Maori whanau who are less likely to approach schools to seek clarification (Hipkins et al., 2005). This

is of concern when considering the influence parents can have on what courses and subjects their tamariki will do at secondary school.

Parental involvement in educational planning is important as parents are the people most likely to influence students' choices followed, with much less impact, by subject teachers, deans and career guidance counsellors (Durie, 2011; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2002; Hipkins et al., 2004). With this in mind it is of concern that many parents lack confidence in their understanding of aspects of NCEA and this impacts on their ability to advise and support their children (Madjar et al., 2009). This suggests that secondary schools need to focus not only on giving students ongoing, well- informed advice but also actively engaging whanau and the community in the process. The ways in which whanau and school relate to each other can have an enormous effect on Maori realising their potential (Durie, 2011).

The literature repeatedly recommends involving parents in any form of academic mentoring (Biddulph. F., Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; ERO., 2008; McKinley et al., 2009). Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009) found that one of the most effective educational strategies is for schools to support students so that they can connect their school work with their whanau, culture and community knowledge and skills. However, secondary schools' reliance on parent-teacher meetings has proved unsatisfactory. All too often parents have reported that they relied on students to inform them about subjects, goal setting and the implications of course selections (Madjar et al., 2009; McKinley et al., 2009). Parents do not just want to be contacted by schools when things are not going well; it is important that they are involved in their child's educational planning in an ongoing manner (Durie, 2011).

Secondary schools that have restructured their parent-teacher meetings so that whanau attend with their child and meet with an allocated teacher for an in-depth overview of their child's achievement have reported a dramatic increase in attendance - one example was an increase of 63% (McKinley et al., 2009). Whanau want their children to be given support and advice but it would be a mistake not to include them in this process. It would hark back to an education system that modelled the belief that schools know best what students need, regardless of ethnicity (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The 'co-construction' of a plan for a child's education involving the parents, the student and a teacher would make it easier for learning to meet an

individual's needs, whanau aspirations and that student's potential (Durie, 2011). The more that a school can connect with the educational culture of students' homes the greater the influence on their academic success (Robinson et al., 2009). Maori achievement could be about seeing opportunity rather than deficit.

Parental involvement in a student's mentoring process can have positive effects on the quality of parent-child communication (Larose et al., 2012). It is thought that it can also challenge students' view of adults as being against them. Positive interaction with adults at school can reduce parents' stress if they feel well informed and included (Larose et al., 2012; Rhodes, 2002). In fact, just knowing that their child has the support of an academic mentor may motivate parents to ask more questions while it gives hope to students and parents who feel overwhelmed by problems (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; Larose et al., 2012). Academic mentoring may be a way for secondary schools in New Zealand to engage whanau and students in setting high but achievable academic targets which open doors for the future rather than closing them.

Parents would like more guidance around subject selection at secondary school (Wylie & Hipkins, 2006). It also continues to be a concern whether all parents and students understand the implications of selecting courses. Students may be looking for options which provide credits rather than 'aiming high', and the information they give to their parents may not make it clear what the consequences are (Madjar et al., 2009). All these factors point to the importance of secondary schools offering information and advice to students and whanau. Academic mentoring could offer the opportunity to place students at the centre of academic decision-making with whanau and teachers working together to support students towards a positive future because they are expected to succeed (Durie, 2011).

Academic mentoring will need to be provided at regular intervals so that students and whanau are not hit with a 'one off' experience which leaves confusion and concern (McKinley et al., 2009). To prevent the experience being overwhelming, academic mentoring needs to be based on sound information, good data and a confident understanding of the NCEA system, including the implications of subject choices (Madjar et al., 2009). This means that any academic mentoring programme will have

to be well designed and sustainable if it is to meet the needs of Maori students and their whanau.

Sustainability

While academic mentoring appears to be a straightforward and cost-effective way to improve student outcomes it is important to recognise that it will not be completely free of cost (McKinley et al., 2009) . Teachers' time costs money and release time will have to be funded to ensure that the high quality conversations required occur with students and whanau. Time will also be required for data analysis and professional development for teachers. Not only will the resources of the school be impacted, any new programme also impacts on teachers' workload. Schools will need to consider what work they can remove from teachers before they begin introducing a new programme.

Resourcing in state secondary schools in New Zealand is always under pressure. This means the resourcing available must be strategically used to maximise positive impact. To achieve this, new programmes need to be worked at consistently over a number of years so that they become sustainable. This leads to the programmes becoming the norm within a school (McKinley et al., 2009) . An academic mentoring programme requires enough resourcing to provide timely, regular, evidence-based advice to students (Madjar et al., 2009) . It is not possible to transfer one academic mentoring programme from one secondary school to another; context is important. Even when comparing similarly sized schools, Hipkins et al. (2004) found that the number and types of courses offered varied markedly between schools. The sustainability of programmes is impacted on by many factors including the ethnic mix within a school and the leadership that is provided (Madjar et al., 2009).

Many projects and programmes designed to improve educational outcomes in New Zealand have faced the problem of sustainability (Bishop, O'Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010). Often programmes are put into place only for funding to be removed, or new educational goals are announced so ongoing support is removed. A particularly destructive approach to real change occurring is the "attempt, attack, abandon cycle" (Knight, 2009b, p. 512). This is where a programme is introduced with little support,

a few try to implement it but soon it is being attacked as not working and then it is abandoned. Schools can very quickly end up in a destructive cycle which means there is never any meaningful progress being made.
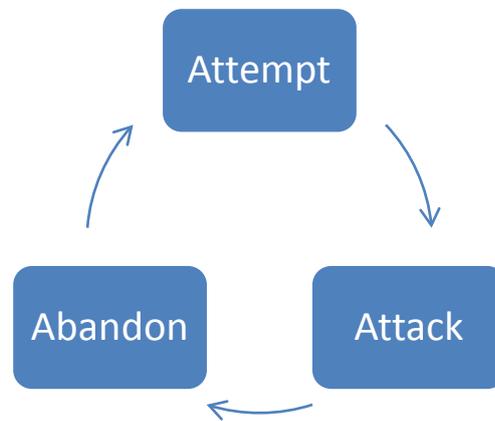
Figure 2.1: The Attempt, Attack, Abandon Cycle
(Source: Knight, 2009a, p. 109)

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) identified lack of continuity as another destructive issue in schools. When schools jump from one new idea to the next teachers become more likely to think "This too shall pass". Academic mentoring is not a programme that can offer gains if the programme is short term (less than 12 months) - the effects of mentoring are not significant for young people if programmes are not sustained (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Larose et al., 2012).   The quality of the leadership will have a profound effect on whether academic mentoring becomes embedded, nourished and sustained within a school (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007).

Leaders within secondary schools need to ensure that there are strategies in place to develop, maintain, evaluate and enhance any programme that is introduced (McKinley et al., 2009). Programmes are more likely to succeed if there is good professional development, ongoing supervision of mentors, frequent mentor/mentee meetings, long lasting mentor/mentee relationships, consistent parental support and the continual good use of data (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; McKinley et al., 2009). Good leadership will sustain the programme and not just focus on the cost but also on the development of policies that demand adherence to evidence-based practice. The use of evaluations will ensure that quality receives as much attention as quantity (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Teachers will often accept an increase in work load if they are

confident that student outcomes are being improved and their work will not be wasted (McKinley et al., 2009). If it is to be successful academic mentoring cannot be a short term, low dose activity (Hughes & Karp, 2004).

It has been suggested that for academic mentoring to be successful in secondary schools it needs to involve a meeting between each student, their mentor and parents two or three times a year to discuss progress, goals and strategies (Hughes & Karp, 2004; McKinley et al., 2009). Research conducted by Bishop and Berryman (2006) showed that for Maori students at secondary schools in New Zealand building relationships was an important link to their academic success. To forge real connections with a mentor, which are based on high expectations, trust and empathy, resources need to be found for students to spend time with their mentor on a consistent basis over a significant period of time (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). This may place a financial and resourcing burden on the school.

To develop an understanding of the resourcing required, schools who have innovative, long term programmes of academic mentoring and goal setting that are producing improved outcomes for their students, especially their Maori students, need to be recognised, encouraged and researched (Madjar et al., 2009). There needs to be a deeper understanding of the impact of academic mentoring. This will allow us to say with assurance that it is a safe, effective intervention. There needs to be better alignment between research and practice (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Research that focuses on what makes academic mentoring successful for Maori students in mainstream secondary schools can only enhance the ability of schools that are struggling to understand what can produce positive effects. This understanding will allow them to work towards improving or providing academic counselling and guidance to their students and parents (Madjar et al., 2009).

Too often ideas are presented as the panacea for educational issues based on anecdotal stories. This is especially true around the issue of closing the achievement gap for Maori students. Without sound research into how to provide excellent, sustainable approaches to academic mentoring the education sector runs the risk of trivialising an intervention which shows promise (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). It is important to understand what works and how to resource it.

Programmes which are introduced to improve educational outcomes for Maori students but do not achieve their goals are disheartening and often cause resistance from teachers towards the next proposed solution (Bishop et al., 2010; Petty, 2009). It is important when introducing new programmes to consider how they will fit into the context of the school and whether the programmes are aimed at trying to make the student adapt to the school and the programme or if the programme aims to help the school adapt to the developmental path of the individual students (Kochhar-Bryant, 2010). Instead of considering how programmes can 'fix' one aspect of a child's schooling it may be necessary to think about how the programme fits into the idea of educating the whole child.

Educating the Whole Child

Educating the whole child is essentially about showing, as educators, through our acts and attitudes that we care about our students and that we are partners in the learning process (Noddings, 2006). Educating the whole child means helping students to be the best that they can be, while accepting that development is a gradual process and students can't be forced to fit a one-size-fits-all developmental graph (Kochhar-Bryant, 2010). It links to what Maslow (1954) has called 'self-actualization'; that is, realising more of our human potential.

The four core qualities suggested for educating the whole child by Miller (2008) are: encouraging experiential learning (more active engagement for students); valuing high quality personal relationship as much as academic subject matter; being concerned for the interior life of the students; and processing a world view that embraces diversity in nature and culture. These qualities seem to align with the idea that Maori students require teachers who value the knowledge they bring to school, build meaningful relationships with them, and who do not see them as a homogenous group for whom there is an as yet,' undiscovered recipe' to address the educational disparities (Mahuika & Bishop, 2008). The individual approach of academic mentoring seems to match the core qualities of educating the whole child and recognises that the diversity of Maori students means there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to meeting their needs (Hemara, 2000).

Academic mentoring is a programme which aims to educate the whole child and help students prosper through meeting their individual, specific learning and assessment

needs. Those needs can be academic, emotional, social or cultural. Unfortunately in New Zealand many Maori students' cultural needs are not appropriately catered for (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Mahuika & Bishop, 2008). This is not because teachers fail to want the best for their students. Rather, the concern is that they have no understanding of how important culture is to Maori students' learning and they have little skill in how to address the issue (Bevan Brown, 2003). Supporting teachers to gain this understanding may hold the key to an academic mentoring programme which holds benefits for Maori students who participate.

Academic mentoring programmes have the potential to support the core values of educating the whole child. However, for them to be successful for Maori students the academic mentors will need to be culturally responsive and recognise that Maori students are not homogenous. The focus cannot be on the learners' 'deficits' but on looking more closely at the role of schools and schooling (Mahuika & Bishop, 2008). To achieve success as academic mentors', staff will need to be culturally responsive.

Academic mentoring programmes which support Maori student success allow whanau and students to have a sense of control and ownership over what, where, and how learning occurs (Durie, 2011). It will place students as the central concern for schools and allow whanau and teachers to work together to create a system which supports their learning and expects them to succeed (Durie, 2011). To do so it will require academic mentors who are culturally responsive (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Culturally responsive academic mentors will be socioculturally conscious and recognise that there are multiple ways of perceiving the world. They will hold affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds and see strengths in their differences and see themselves as responsible and capable of creating change in education that will make schools more responsive to all students. They will also understand how learners construct knowledge, know their students well and be inclusive of their families. Finally, they will use their knowledge about their students to create learning which builds on what they already know, while also having high academic expectations for them (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Academic mentoring which is culturally responsive could allow 'whole child education' which means schools can value individual variation (including Maori student variation), have high academic expectations for all their individual students, and involve whanau in a sustainable way.

Summary

It is clear from the literature that inequitable outcomes for Maori students started well before they were identified, and that the policies of assimilation and limiting curriculum availability had strong influences on the achievement of Maori students in mainstream education.   The literature shows that low teacher expectations, deficit theorising and undervaluing Maori knowledge have created barriers for generations of Maori students.

Mainstream secondary education in New Zealand has been challenged to reassess the way it approaches education for Maori. Projects such as *Te Kotahitanga* (Ministry of Education, 2014e) and *He Kakano* (Ministry of Education, 2014a) alongside bodies such as Te Puni Kokiri have moved the focus away from 'fixing' Maori and deficit theorising and brought into focus realising Maori potential. Schools and teachers are being asked to look at the changes they need to make to ensure Maori students can reach this potential. This has led to the realisation that Maori students are individuals and there is not a 'recipe' to follow that will create success. Schools will need to find ways that allow Maori to celebrate being Maori, and to capitalise on that as a strength.

One approach being suggested that would promote individuals being valued and Maori being able to succeed as Maori is academic mentoring. While the literature focuses on academic mentoring, there are gaps in relation to Maori students. Therefore some of the themes which emerged are being studied in relation to Maori students to respond to that gap. The main themes that emerged from the literature which influenced the basis of my research were: the impact of academic decision making on Maori students' futures; the influence whanau have over Maori students' education and the need to involve them in educational planning for their child; the factors that need to be addressed to make academic mentoring a sustainable programme in mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand, and how academic mentoring can assist in educating the whole child.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the questions that guided this research project, outlines the methodological approach used and examines some of the limitations of qualitative research and how these were mitigated. It then discusses how the methodology was aligned with research involving Maori participants and how a kaupapa Maori perspective has been included. This discussion examines models that can assist non-Maori researchers and suggests the competencies required to work with Maori research participants. There is a description of the participants and an explanation of the data collection methods used and how the data was analysed. The final section

of the chapter outlines the key ethical issues in the research and how the potential problems related to these were allayed.

The Research Questions

The purpose of the research was to critically explore the perceived benefits and difficulties that accrue for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring in mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand. The questions which guided the study were:

- Why have educational leaders in two secondary schools provided academic mentoring for Maori students?

- How have two secondary schools implemented academic mentoring with Maori students?

- What perceived benefits and difficulties have accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring?

Methodology

Before embarking on a research project it is important to grapple with one's own belief system about knowledge (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). All research makes assumptions about what counts as legitimate knowledge based on the inquirer's ontology (an inventory of the kinds of things that do, or can, exist in the world) and epistemology (the philosophical theory of knowledge, how we know what we know) (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Understanding one's ontological assumptions makes the inquirer consider their epistemological assumptions, their methodological approaches and the best way for data to be collected for a research project (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Through understanding one's own paradigms (a collection of ontological and epistemological assumptions) it is possible to uncover how one looks at the world (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). There are many different approaches to deciding what to research. A positivist approach involves building research around a prescribed theme; it has clear boundaries and defines life in measurable terms (Cohen et al., 2007). A post-positivist approach reflects an area of concern which often arises out of experience and is then traced back to literature. It involves choice and is interpretive,

as it accepts that humans exercise agency and do not behave in predetermined ways (Cohen et al., 2007). A positivist approach specifies the type of information to be collected in advance of the study; an interpretive approach allows the information to emerge from the participants in the project (Creswell, 2002). I used an interpretive approach in my research. This allowed Maori students' participation in academic mentoring to be viewed from a variety of perspectives and it lent itself to a pragmatic paradigm where there is scope to suggest answers through using a number of different methods. This approach is supported by the literature (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2002; Youngs & Piggot-Irvine, 2012).

The creation of knowledge in this research project depended on human participants sharing their perceptions and experiences with the researcher. Experiences which involved individual reactions to situations meant emotions, actions and values surfaced that created individual judgements of successes and failures. Meaning was created which was subjective. This meant that the experiences needed to be studied from an interpretive perspective. Through detailed inquiry of students, staff and whanau I was able to gain qualitative data which allowed me to describe and understand the problem and to understand the expectations and experiences of the stakeholders (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

This study sought to focus on the perceived benefits and difficulties that accrue for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring in mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand. To engage in this study a *qualitative research methodology* was adopted as the most suitable for gaining an understanding of the participants' experiences and opinions. The literature concerned with Maori education noticeably focuses on the under-achievement of Maori within the main stream and why this has happened. Merita Mita states in her interview with Helen Martin that "We have a history of putting Maori under a microscope in the same way a scientist looks at an insect. The ones doing the looking are giving themselves the power to define and describe" (Martin, 1989, p. 30). I acknowledge that as a Pakeha researcher researching a Maori issue with Maori participants, I need to reject deficit thinking. My reason for doing the research is not to suggest that Maori are to blame for underachievement but to examine whether academic mentoring is a valid way of challenging the system to better recognise Maori potential as proposed by *Te Puni Kokiri* (as cited in Durie, 2011). Qualitative research methodology was the best

approach for this as it seeks to gather information on human behaviour and questions the how and why of decision making, analysing society rather than quantifying and measuring social life. Educational issues can rarely be reduced to two variables and qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to understand the ways different aspects relate to each other. It can also lead to learning for educators and, over time, change in the education system (Keeves, 1997).

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research aims to uncover the reality of research participants by gathering rich descriptions of the area of interest with the desire to help others understand it (Mutch, 2005). It is inherently political and shaped by a number of ethical and political positions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this research the people I hoped to inform are those involved in education such as principals, teachers, and whanau. This is a group I am a part of, not only as a teacher of Maori students but also as a person who is concerned about social justice and how my role in a system can continue to perpetuate social injustice or can strive to change it. The present system of mainstream education in New Zealand is unjust for Maori students.

The area of interest of this study was the perceived benefits and difficulties that accrue for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring in mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand. Two research methods were used in this study - face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews. To understand the rationales used by two educational leaders in secondary schools for offering academic mentoring to Maori students, I believed it was necessary to have face to face interviews with the educational leaders who had driven and implemented the academic mentoring programmes in their schools. An interview is a two-person conversation led by the inquirer to gain the data they need to enhance their understanding of an issue (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To understand how two secondary schools approached offering academic mentoring to Maori students, and the perceived benefits and difficulties associated with academic mentoring for Maori students, data needed to be obtained from the staff, students and whanau/caregivers involved in the academic mentoring process. The information required was gathered through focus groups, one for each group mentioned. A focus group is a form of group interviewing which is set up to explore participants' views and experiences through group

discussion and interaction. The group is usually small (6-10 people) and the members may have some common experiences (Litoselliti, 2003). Focus groups involve a carefully planned discussion intended to gather perceptions in an accepting, non threatening way (Krueger, 1994). Therefore the two data gathering methods used, were interviews and focus groups which are consistent with a qualitative approach.

Interviewing

An interview involves gathering data through direct verbal interaction. It is a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer to obtain research-relevant information (Cannell & Kahn, 1968). Although an interview involves talking, we should not be deluded into thinking that interviewing is a simple process that takes no extraordinary preparation or talent (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012). Humans are complex and ever changing, and therefore, the ease with which they misunderstand each other is one reason that research interviews can be very difficult to conduct effectively (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Vogt et al., 2012). Interviewing is one of the most powerful and common ways of trying to understand fellow humans (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Interviews are interactive, not merely a data collecting exercise (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers interview people because they know things that researchers want to know. Interviews are aimed at specific individuals; they are conducted so the researcher can understand an issue or area of interest in more depth.

For the purposes of this research study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the educational leader in each of the two schools who is responsible for the academic mentoring programme. As the interviewer I was guided by some suggested questions which allowed for the further exploration of ideas and did not limit responses (Hinds, 2000). This allowed for unexpected and useful conversational direction (Bryman, 2012). This approach suited my research better than a structured interview as I wanted to explore the reasons behind the programme being introduced from the interviewees' perspectives and I did not want to stop illuminating discussion. In my experience introducing any new programme takes a great deal of work and commitment so I was interested in the reasons that academic mentoring was selected by these academic leaders for their respective schools. I ensured that I considered the interview environment carefully before conducting the interviews. These

considerations included the use of heat, light, furniture and body language to make sure that the interviewees felt comfortable (Hinds, 2000).

Focus Groups

The second type of data gathering method I used was focus groups. The questions used for each of the six focus groups were a combination of questions derived from the data gathered from the interviews detailed above, and a set of questions established at the beginning of the research project. Focus groups are a form of interview which use the communication between the participants to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). A focus group explores people's views and prior experiences through the group interactions (Litoselliti, 2003). The focus groups allowed a carefully thought out discussion, guided by a facilitator, to gather perceptions on academic mentoring in a non-threatening, accepting environment (Krueger, 1994). The participants were able to bounce ideas around and discuss common assumptions that could otherwise have been left unarticulated (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Raby, 2010).

The participants in a focus group are actively encouraged to talk to one another. Through the conversation, guided by a series of open-ended questions, the researcher can promote participants' exploring areas of the research topic that they know about or feel strongly about; that is, they have an active role in setting the direction the conversation takes (Kitzinger, 1995). This process allows the researcher to access data that provides a deeper understanding of the issue than would be possible if using more conventional methods of gathering data, such as surveys (Kitzinger, 1995). It also allows participants to be actively involved in the research and it is hoped that using focus groups mitigated against this project treating Maori participants as merely 'research subjects' when discussing academic mentoring. The desired outcome of using focus groups was that the balance of power was tipped slightly towards the participants and the shared interactions and understandings informed the research project (Cohen et al., 2007; Raby, 2010).

Each focus group comprised a selected group of staff, Maori students or whanau. Purposive sampling was used to ensure a good match between the research questions and the participants (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of the sampling was not

to have a random sample from the general population but to identify specific people who could enable the exploration of an aspect of academic mentoring (Mays & Pope, 1995). The discussions allowed rich insights into the difficulties and benefits of being involved with the academic mentoring programme. Focus groups are particularly sensitive to other cultures and can empower the participants as they become actively involved in the process (Kitzinger, 1995). This added to their suitability for research conducted by a Pakeha researcher with Maori participants.

Limitations of Qualitative Research

Commonly heard criticisms of qualitative research are that it is too strongly associated with personal impressions and researcher bias, and that it lacks reproducibility and the ability to be generalised (Mays & Pope, 1995). To improve the reliability of data and analysis, the qualitative researcher must maintain detailed records of their methods and have some degree of independent assessment of their transcripts (Mays & Pope, 1995). To ensure validity, the research must show integrity in the conclusions and have a balance of perspectives, contribute to the field of study and have the ability to make possible changes to the research area (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007).

The interview is not a neutral tool for gathering data and analysis (Cohen et al., 2007) as the interviewer can steer the interview in the direction they wish it to go. In my research, a genuine attempt was made to keep my influence to a minimum through using a semi-structured interview approach, not asking leading questions, using brief prompts, and asking open ended questions. Participants verified their data and had the opportunity to change the transcripts of their interviews.

Focus groups are harder to direct than individual interviews and can be difficult to organise, coordinate and analyse (Bryman, 2012). They may also create an environment where the members can be influenced by others to adopt an opinion that may not have occurred in a different setting, or lone voices of dissent can remain silent so they do not appear to be out of sync with the other participants (Viscek, 2010). This means that the researcher must be aware of the group dynamic and take into account the interactions between the research participants as well as individual quotes (Kitzinger, 1995). It is also important that minority opinions and examples are given attention (Kitzinger, 1995; Mays & Pope, 1995). In this project focus groups were seen

as important as this research involved a non-Maori researcher working with Maori. Focus groups offered a method of hearing a number of voices and offering some control over the researcher's findings. This was done by providing a written copy of the interim findings to all participants so that they could verify them. This allowed for internal validation of the research (Bryman, 2012). The use of focus groups made it possible to explore dimensions of the research topic such as how academic mentoring fitted into the overall ethos of the schools. This would not have been considered if other methods such as questionnaires had been used (Kitzinger, 1995). As a non-Maori researcher I did not have the world view the Maori participants had. The focus group method of data collection allowed Maori world views to come forward.

Maori Participating In Research

Maori experience of research has often been negative (Bishop, 2005; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). Pakeha research in the past about Maori and in particular Maori in relation to educational achievement, has left Maori feeling used, blamed and no better off (Bishop, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; L. T. Smith, 2012). Historically research for Maori meant that researchers created the questions and also, decided how the data would be gathered and analysed. The results would explain Maori deficits (Sheriff, 2010). These results seemed to suggest that Maori were to blame and deficit theories caused victim-blaming and damage when they were used by politicians to promote and enforce policies of assimilation (Bishop, 1998; A. Jones, Marshall, Matthews, Smith, & Smith, 1995).

Research that promotes change is what is needed, not research that repeatedly describes the position that Maori currently occupy. I acknowledge that as a Pakeha researcher researching a Maori issue with Maori participants, I needed to reject deficit thinking. My reason for doing the research is not to suggest that Maori are to blame for underachievement but to examine whether academic mentoring is a way of challenging the education system in mainstream secondary schools to better recognise Maori potential as proposed by *Te Puni Kokiri* (as cited in Durie, 2011). More importantly, I wanted to understand if academic mentoring was seen as helping to recognise Maori student potential by Maori students and whanau, as well as by staff within the school.

My research was conducted in English language medium schools but involved Maori participants. It was not conducted as Kaupapa Maori research but it was informed by the models proposed by G. Smith (1990) to ensure cultural and social sensitivity. I used two of his proposed models. The first is the Tiaki model (mentoring) where the researcher is guided and mediated by knowledgeable Maori people. To do this I needed to seek guidance from the Maori members of the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and a small Maori advisory committee consisting of the Maori Head of Department from my school and a woman who acts as a Maori mentor (non-academic). I also used the power-sharing model where community assistance was sought to develop the research in a meaningful way. I met with participants before interviewing and was open to questions and discussion about the research. Both principals presented my research to their Board of Trustees and I offered to meet with them to answer any questions. I endeavoured to also use the empowering model in that the research I have completed sought to provide answers and information that Maori wish to know.

Ethical Considerations

Research offers advancement, but it also imposes burdens; the key to research ethics is how we treat other human beings (Wilkinson, 2001). The flexibility of qualitative research means research integrity and ethics are important to consider. People need assurance that researchers have worked tirelessly to complete accurate and fair research (Yin, 2011). As a researcher I needed to consider the impact my work would have on those involved and look after their dignity (Cohen et al., 2007). I could not impose burdens on those involved in the research by suggesting it was for the greater good or an abstract goal (Wilkinson, 2001). All researchers should consider ethical issues and have a code to work by to ensure integrity and trustworthiness (Yin, 2011).

This research project was presented to and approved by the Ethics Committee of Unitec Institute of Technology. In outlining the research there was assurance given that the process would be consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi and the ethical principles governing research and teaching activities with people would be followed. The ethical principals are: informed and voluntary consent, respect for rights and confidentiality and preservation of anonymity, minimisation of harm, cultural and social

sensitivity, limitation of deception, respect for intellectual and cultural property ownership, avoidance of conflict of interest and research design adequacy.

Autonomy and well being supports informed consent; subjects need to decide for themselves what is in their best interests (Wilkinson, 2001). Any participant in research must know what they could be getting into. This meant disclosing all information and making sure that the information was understood (Cohen et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2001). I met with both Principals before the research began and outlined my research in detail. I then offered to meet with the Board of Trustees and the Kaumatua of the schools. The Principals both felt happy with the discussions and their ability to discuss the research with the Board of Trustees and Kaumatua. They agreed that if any questions or concerns arose these would best be addressed in person. At no time did this occur. I also met with the person running the academic mentoring programme at each school before the data gathering began to allow for in-depth understanding of the project and to answer any questions. Time was allocated before each focus group to allow me to disclose my personal role in education and to discuss why I was doing this research and to answer any questions participants had. This allowed the participants to experience the research lens I was using so they could make their own assessment of whether or not they wanted to give informed consent (Yin, 2011).

Voluntary consent means that consent must be given feely without manipulation. Using coercion or force "undermines the moral validity of consent" (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 16). The desire to have participants cannot come before a commitment to being open and honest and never applying pressure. Letters were supplied to all participants and face to face meetings happened before each focus group to make sure that all questions could be addressed. When meeting with the students, consent was gained from both students and whanau. Both the student and the whanau had to freely give their consent before the student could be involved in the focus group.

Respecting the rights of the participants was imperative in my research as Maori experience of research in the past has been negative (Bishop, 2005; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003; Sheriff, 2010). Research has described the performance gap between Maori and Pakeha and then promoted that Maori were to blame for this (A. Jones et al., 1995). In order to respect participants' rights I worked hard on maintaining

relationships that allowed for open communication and listened carefully to the participants' assertions around how this research could benefit Maori (Bishop, 2005; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003).

In respect to confidentiality and anonymity individuals and schools are not named in the thesis, and I accept that the burden of confidentiality sits with me as the interviewer and facilitator of the focus groups (Vogt et al., 2012). In the discussion before the focus group I spent time emphasising the importance of confidentiality around what was shared in the group and the need to not discuss the conversation with others. The schools both had core values that were highly visible around the school and I referred to those when discussing this issue. The focus group and interview transcripts used pseudonyms rather than participants' real names so as not to reveal their identities or those of the school. All data is securely stored using password protection.

As the researcher, responsibility lay with me to ensure no harm came to any of the participants who took part in my research (Cohen et al., 2007). The possibility of harm depended on how I treated the participants and on how vulnerable they were (Cohen et al., 2007; Vogt et al., 2012). I needed to ensure I was compassionate, respectful, gracious and used a great deal of common sense to remain aware of the contexts I was in and to make sure that I did not contribute to any harm occurring (Cohen et al., 2007; Vogt et al., 2012). To do this I needed to be constantly aware of the imbalance of power created by my role as a researcher, a Pakeha and, for the students, as an adult. I needed to be open about myself, explain the process as many times as required, allow questions and to always answer honestly.

My research involved Maori participants and I used two of the models proposed by G. Smith (1990) to ensure cultural and social sensitivity. It was important to consider elements of kaupapa Maori research when working with the Maori participants such as karakia and the provision of kai. Kaupapa Maori research will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

No deception was required in my research and I respected intellectual and cultural property ownership by understanding and willingly abiding by a Maori system of ethics and accountability. Interview participants had access to transcripts and focus group members were given draft findings for critique and comment. I accept that my role as

the researcher was to broker knowledge and to identify benefits for Maori from the research. I am committed to the Treaty of Waitangi and I wish to improve secondary education for Maori in New Zealand, not merely describe what is happening or cause more harm (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

There was no conflict of interest in either of the schools that participated in the research and I maintained my research design adequacy through consistently consulting with my supervisors. Through all of the above actions I endeavoured to conduct research that shows integrity, quality and transparency (Bryman, 2012).

Kaupapa Maori Research

This research was focused on Maori students in mainstream education. It paid attention to the Maori participants' backgrounds, worldview and tikanga Maori. Appropriate tikanga (correct procedure and convention) was followed and whakawhanaungatanga (process of establishing relationships and relating to others) and manaakitanga (hospitality) were included to ensure participants felt comfortable and respected at all times. The outcomes of the research were shared. The research was not conducted as Kaupapa Maori research but I was informed by Kaupapa Maori research models (Bishop, 2005).

Kaupapa Maori research is based on eight principles:
- Tino Rangatiratanga – The Principle of Self-determination
- Taonga Tuku Iho – The Principle of Cultural Aspiration
- Ako Maori – The Principle of Culturally Preferred Pedagogy
- Kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga – The Principle of Socio-Economic Mediation
- Whanau- The Principle of Extended Family Structure
- Kaupapa – The Principle of Collective Philosophy
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The Principle of the Treaty of Waitangi; and
- Ata – The Principle of Growing Respectful Relationships

Graham Smith identified the first six principles and these were consequently added to by researchers such as Linda Smith, Leonie Pihama and Taina Pohatu (Rangahau, 2014). Kaupapa Maori research places Maori understandings in the centre of the

design, process, analysis and intended outcomes of the research. While informed of the above my research project was about improving mainstream education for Maori students. Therefore I needed to have a good understanding of Maori worldview and Kaupapa Maori research theory for the research to be respectful and valid but it was not about Kaupapa Maori alone. The research methodology needed to be culturally appropriate (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003) while offering ideas for mainstream secondary education to consider.

Within mainstream secondary education in New Zealand eight percent of teachers are Maori (Ministry of Education, 2005). While it is clear that deficit thinking is not going to improve Maori success in our mainstream schools it is also clear that Maori achievement cannot be addressed with a 'one size fits all' approach (Lawrence, 2011). It is hoped that this research will offer non-Maori teachers in mainstream secondary education new ways to challenge their deficit thinking while offering greater understanding of how academic mentoring can assist Maori students gain success while retaining their dignity. In the process of doing this research, however, I had to continually ensure that I considered the impact the research would have on those involved and look after their mana (Cohen et al., 2007). I could not justify imposing burdens on those involved by suggesting it was for the greater good or an abstract goal (Wilkinson, 2001).

Sample Group

The research participants were members of staff, Year 12 or 13 Maori students and whanau from two rural state co-educational mainstream secondary schools. One is a decile six school with 22% of its population being Maori, the other is a decile one school with 80% of its population being Maori.

Participant sampling was conducted so that the participants were selected in terms of criteria that would allow the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012). Purposive sampling was used to select staff, Maori students and whanau who had been involved with the mentoring programmes in their respective schools for at least two years. It was also used to ensure that the students participating were in Year 12 and 13 as the researcher felt that older students could be less inhibited in their

answers. This criteria for selection meant the participants had a greater likelihood of being able to answer the questions (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007).

Data Collection

Data was collected during two face-to-face interviews and six focus group interviews with up to six participants. All of the interviews and focus groups were semi-structured. The interview schedules were used as a guide but the participants were enabled to guide the process so that a diverse range of connected topics could emerge (Bryman, 2012).

The main purpose of the face-to-face interviews was to understand the rationale used by the educational leaders for introducing academic mentoring to Maori students and to understand how the leaders perceived the school had implemented the programmes. It was also to understand what benefits and difficulties they perceived Maori students associated with academic mentoring experienced. The focus groups were set up to understand how the staff, whanau and Maori students believed the programmes had been implemented and what their perceptions were about the benefits or difficulties associated with the programmes for Maori students.

Data Analysis

Analysis is a transformative process whereby raw data is turned into findings (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). The semi-structured interviews and focus groups interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed by the researcher and coded according to emergent themes. This thematic approach (Bryman, 2012; Mutch, 2005) was done manually. A thematic analysis approach consisted of constructing an index of themes and subthemes which were first based on the literature and then from a thorough reading of the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups (Bryman, 2012). The recognition of themes came from initial coding and focused coding (Lofland et al., 2006).

Interview participants were given transcripts of the interviews and focus group members were given initial findings from their focus group interviews. This meant that participants were able to consider the way the data was being presented. This participant validation was sought to provide validity (Bryman, 2012) and to address the

issues of representation and researcher accountability, especially in regards to the participants own cultural world views (Bishop, 2005).

Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach used in this study. It has outlined the qualitative research methods used; semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The limitations of qualitative research and the selected methods have been addressed. There has been a description of the sample group, the data collection and the analysis.

Added to this there has been attention to the ethical considerations of this research and the necessity for the researcher to be mindful of the issues associated with Maori participating in research. As part of this consideration Kaupapa Maori research models were discussed.

This research is based on hearing the voices of the participants. Through hearing and analysing their perspectives about academic mentoring in New Zealand secondary schools greater understanding of the issue can be developed.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter data from the two interviews and six focus groups are presented. The purpose of the interviews with the two educational leaders and the focus groups was:

- To understand the rationale behind offering academic mentoring for Maori students in their schools;
- To collect the perceptions of staff, Maori students and whanau relating to the approaches that their schools currently employ in providing academic mentoring to Maori students;
- To explore what they believed to be the benefits and difficulties that accrue for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring.

The interview and focus group questions are included in Appendices A, B, C and D. I conducted one interview and three focus groups in each school and the data was aggregated for educational leaders, staff, Maori students and whanau separately.

The chapter begins by presenting a brief overview of the interview and focus group participants from each school. The process used to analyse the data is then outlined. The questions used for the interviews and the focus groups provide the headings for the presentation of the data, and the tables are used to highlight the frequency of the specific sub-themes that emerge from the data. The sub-themes are then grouped into the major themes.

The data is presented in the following manner:

1. The data collection questions for the interview and focus groups are stated. These can be found in Appendices A, B, C and D;
2. The key-sub-themes identified from the data are noted and presented in a table. The responses of the education leaders, staff, Maori students and whanau are categorised under C (Coast School) and R (River School); and
3. A commentary discussing the data collected follows, which includes separate commentary for the educational leaders, staff, Maori students and whanau.

The Research Participants

The interview participants

The pseudonyms "Coast School" and "River School" have been used in order to protect the identity of the research sites. For the purpose of this thesis, both educational leaders will be referred to as 'she'. Both educational leaders are very experienced and have been at their respective schools for a significant period of time, certainly long enough to be familiar with the academic mentoring programme, and both have contributed to the implementation and ongoing development of the programme. One is the Principal of her school, the other a Deputy Principal.

The focus group participants

Participants were asked to volunteer after being given a copy of the outline of the research by their principal. Participants were allocated random pseudonym names with C or R at the end of each name to indicate their association with the Coast School and River School respectively. Nine staff were involved in two focus groups (four staff in the focus group at Coast School and five in the focus group at River School). Seven

participating staff are female and two are male. They range in teaching experience from a first year teacher through to a teacher who has taught for over twenty years and a support staff member. Eight Maori students participated in two focus groups (six students in the focus group at River School and two in the focus group at Coast school). As a group, the students come from diverse backgrounds and were either Year 12 or Year 13. The Maori students had all attended their school for between two years, and four and a half years. Three were male and five female. All knew their iwi affiliations and identified as Maori. Four whanau members participated in focus groups, two from each school. All whanau had at least three years association with the respective schools, were female and had iwi affiliations.

Findings

Interviews and focus groups

Question One asked: Why do you think the academic mentoring programme was put in place?

The responses to this question are shown in Table 4.1, along with the number of responses from each participant group.

Table 4.1   Question 1: Why do you think the academic mentoring programme was put in place? Educational Leaders', Staff, Maori Students' and whanau data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	*Leaders*		*Staff*		*Whanau*		*Students*		*Total*
	C	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	
To set goals and expectations	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	5	16
To have better academic knowledge of students	1	1	3	3	2				10
Build strong staff/student relationships	1	1	3	4	1	2	1		13
To create stronger links with whanau	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	3	12

Both educational leaders were able to clearly outline their understanding of the reasons for academic mentoring being put in place at their schools. Educational Leader Coast was able to clearly outline how the thinking had developed:

> *It's having that one person in the school who has got your back. Who is there for academic support, to offer you guidance, to go to if they've got issues around teachers or subjects or they are struggling with things. The person that knows*

their family by their first name and the families can ring. It's that relationship, that wanting families to feel that there is a connection there.

Educational Leader River identified that the programme was about asking questions about what was best for students:

How will this meet the learning needs of students, will this make a difference? It's just not giving up on a kid. Just you know keep going and going and going until you find something to work. I think that that's really important.

Seven of the staff identified that academic mentoring at their respective schools had been put in place because it was focused on relationships, they identified building relationships as the most important aspect of connecting with Maori students:

Natalie C: It's whanaungatanga based, it's whanau based.

Valerie C: The kids knowing that they have always got somebody in their corner.

Susan R: I kind of see my role (academic mentor) as a significant other person that students can talk to if they choose.

Six staff also noted that academic mentoring was introduced to ensure that the academic information held about the student was used well in the schools. Relationship building was seen as a way of ensuring the academic data could be used to make a difference for students. For example:

Matthew R: I personally know academically where every one of my (mentee) students is. I know the credits they're on; I know if they're failing, I know if they're struggling, I know if they're excelling. So you can do the hard care, soft care thing with them and as an (academic mentor) you get the opportunity to build that relationship and then try to find the angle that you need to take with that kid.

Eloise C: One word that comes to mind is whanaungatanga for me and so you've got several opportunities throughout the school day where you can use that, utilise that connection to make a difference.

There was clear recognition from the staff that using academic data was important:

Valerie C: We do credit checking, credit tracking and all that sort of thing. Just making sure that they get on the right courses.

Paul R: It's the data generated that gives information to the (academic mentors) that allows having meaningful discussions.

All four whanau identified that academic mentoring was put in place in the schools to aid in students' academic goal setting. They felt that having the programme meant students discuss their goals and what subjects they need to reach those goals:

> *Sandra C: I know they do talk about the subjects that they choose, they are consulting with the (academic mentor) and the mentor does talk with them and help them make the right move. Which subjects to take or look at the different subjects and what they would gain from taking that one?*

> *Jane R: His (academic mentor) wouldn't allow him to have those subject choices. The korero they've had at (academic mentoring) has done things we couldn't do at home.*

Three whanau also identified that academic mentoring allowed students to have more one-on-one contact with someone, and that it made it easier for whanau to contact the school.

The students were less knowledgeable regarding the reasons why the programme had been put in place. At River School the programme had been in place for as long as they had been at school. At Coast School they had experienced it for two and a half years. Seven of the students identified that it was probably put in place to help them set goals and stay on track with their work. For example:

> *Karl R: She (academic mentor) keeps us on track.*

> *Aroha C: You talk about what you have to finish and what you need to get done.*

Four students also suggested that participating in the academic mentoring programme meant someone contacted home if there were problems:

> *Anaru C: They will ring your house or send a letter.*

> *Tui R: She (academic mentor) checks up on people and if we're away, she'll ring your parents and say things like Tui is late all the time, she needs to wake up earlier.*

Evident throughout the data collected from the school leaders and teachers is a significant concern with the student as an individual deserving of assistance, respect, time and effort. Moreover, teachers used the Maori concept of whanaungatanga (a relationship, kinship, sense of family connection developed through shared experiences and working together which provides a sense of belonging) to express

complex ideas about student belonging and student sense of place through the development and maintenance of quality relationships between mentors and students. Whanau also expressed appreciation for the fact that their child was being looked after and supported in ways that were appropriate, useful and sustainable. It is interesting, however, that students did not express the same concepts so freely, and seemed to be more concerned with the mentor knowing their grades and making sure they got their work done.

Question Two asked: To what extent do you think academic mentoring has impacted on Maori student subject choice?

The theme of students having better conversations about their subject choices was dominant in the responses from participants regarding the extent to which academic mentoring has impacted on Maori student subject choice. The responses are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   *Question 2: To what extent do you think academic mentoring has impacted on Maori student subject choice? Educational Leaders', Staff, Maori Students' and whanau data (C= Coast School; R= River School)*

Response data	*Leaders*		*Staff*		*Whanau*		*Students*		*Total*
	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	
There are more informed conversations about subject selection	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	13
Subject selections are linked to pathways which are challenging	1	1	2	1	1				6

Both educational leaders felt that students were having conversations that were more informed and that this was leading to Maori students selecting subjects which challenged them more academically and were relevant to their future goals. Educational Leader River stated:

> *The (academic mentors) keep opening up the conversations for the students around it (subject choice) so that when they go to see someone they are thoughtful about what things mean to them in terms of a good subject choice.*

Educational Leader Coast added a further dimension suggesting the conversations worked because of trust:

> *I think having those conversations, I feel that particularly with our Maori students being informed and being able to talk about what they want to be, what is their career option means they don't just take what they like or what they think*

they were expected to take. Having those conversations and having someone that they trust that's actually working with them on them.

Three staff commented that conversations about subject choice were more prevalent than before the introduction of academic mentoring. A staff member at River School felt this led to being able to direct Maori students towards more academic subjects:

Paul R: That's the theme of those interviews, don't close your options. The most common potential problem is kids taking the easy, taking unit standards instead of achievement standards subjects as the easy option. You've got to be careful with that.

Other staff members could clearly identify a Maori student who was not challenging themselves academically:

Judith R: It's to get the best out of the students that they are capable of. Whether it's a harsh conversation and saying you're better than this.

Valerie C: I don't know if she would have gone into Level 2 Maths and things without being pushed.
Natalie C: She wouldn't have, she'd take the easy road.

Two whanau participants felt that the academic mentoring programmes in their schools were promoting better conversations about subject selection and that they were involved in the process:

Sandra C: You come in with your child and you sit down with the (academic mentor) and you go through the subjects.

Jane R: So I have a son who is academically more capable of achieving with excellence. So when it came to subject choices he said I'm taking this, this, this and this. I commented, no sciences? He's like nah. I know the subject choices he was taking were not going to get him university entrance or whatever it's called. But he's not thinking, he's a 16 year old boy, so he wasn't thinking that far ahead. I left it in the end and then it wasn't until the first lot of interviews or conferencing that I went through his subjects and oh he did take those (more academic, science included) subjects.

Marama C, a whanau participant from Coast school, also pointed out that she believed her son's involvement in academic mentoring had helped with his confidence:

This will be his first year in kapa haka since he's been in college. That just goes to show the confidence he's gained and that's being in that whanau environment.

Five Maori student participants identified discussions about subjects and what levels they needed as occurring because of the academic mentoring programme.

> *Anaru C: What levels I need, like level 2s and stuff.*

> *Tui R: My example is last year I was doing really bad in Physics, so they helped me, I dropped Physics and took Health instead. It's still on the same pathway.*

The data collected from the school leaders, teachers, whanau and students shows recognition of the need for regular conversations to occur between the students and the academic mentor in regards to subject selection. The teachers clearly outlined the need for there to be a trusting relationship established for these conversations to be meaningful. Whanau showed their support for these conversations and highlighted the benefits beyond subject selection such as the growth of their children's confidence. Moreover, they indicated that they felt good about being involved in the conversations. It is worth noting that teachers were not prepared to comment on academic mentoring having an impact on <u>all</u> Maori students' subject selection.

Question Three asked: What impact has academic mentoring had on the contact between school and the whanau of Maori students?

The responses to this question, along with the number of responses, are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3   Question 3: What impact has academic mentoring had on the contact between school and the whanau of Maori students? Educational Leaders', Staff, Maori Students' and whanau data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	*Leaders*		*Staff*		*Whanau*		*Students*		*Total*
	C	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	
More whanau contact	*1*	*1*	*3*	*6*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*4*	*21*
More positive interactions	*1*	*1*	*1*	*4*	*2*	*2*			*11*
More of a partnership			*4*	*2*	*1*	*2*			*9*

The educational leaders have been at their respective schools for many years and they have a historical perspective on whanau contact with the school. Both identified there being more whanau contact and more positive interactions with whanau since beginning the academic mentoring programme. The educational leader of River School described a new conferencing approach at her school and agreed that it had improved whanau participation. She also outlined that to make the interaction with

whanau more positive whenever they were discussing discipline issues the conversation was always focused on learning:

> *Whenever a student is in serious trouble there is always a conversation (with the whanau) about learning and where the student is at in their learning.*

The educational leader from Coast School was able to be more specific about the increase they had seen in whanau contact:

> *We have what we call a half day hui and that's where we basically teach blocks one and two and then in the lunch time and afternoon we visit with all of our families. They come in and see us. We went from our traditional subject evenings where we had about a 20% hit to 80% of our families coming in to meet with the (academic mentor).*

She also outlined that whanau meetings:

> *Definitely have a lot more positive interactions. I think our whanau feel comfortable to approach us.*

However, while both educational leaders felt there had been improvement in whanau contact, both highlighted it as an area in which they believed the school could improve. The educational leader from River School stated:

> *I guess where to next. I would like to see us being more intentional about getting the parents and whanau on board.*

All staff from River School and three out of five from Coast School commented that the academic mentoring programme had increased contact with Maori students' whanau:

> *Valerie C: Some parents have the (academic mentors) cell number and they'll give them a call anytime they're worried.*

> *Mania C: We have to contact home and request parents come in for interviews and feed-back. I think that has improved the relationships with whanau.*

> *Susan R: So they'll (whanau) phone me and get me to pass information on, whereas in the past they may not have even known who to call.*

Five staff also noted that the contact was more positive:

> *Paul R: With the old system if you were contacting home it tended to be because of problems, whereas, with this it has become normal to contact home.*
> *Judith R: Yeah, it's positives.*
> *Matthew R: And you get a much better response too from parents when it's like that.*

> *Natalie C: It's just having that feeling that we're all on the same page. That even though they don't think they have anything to offer our school we value them.*

All of the staff participants from Coast School and two from River School felt that the academic mentoring programme introduced at their school had created more of a partnership with whanau of Maori students:

> *Natalie C: You know it's you, them (the student) and the parents together, you know we try and work together.*

> *Judith R: So there is that really close link with the whanau as well and that makes a huge difference because you're all on the same page.*

All of the whanau spoken to commented that the academic mentoring programmes provided the opportunity for more whanau contact with the school. Furthermore, they felt this contact was more positive. Three of the whanau commented that they felt academic mentoring had provided more of a partnership with the school for whanau. Comments which highlighted more contact included:

> *Jane R: You do find that they (academic mentors) approach you anywhere.*

> *Sandra C: For me I know I can get their (academic mentor) anytime.*

The feeling the contact is positive is highlighted by comments such as:

> *Huia R: It's not being told by the school this is what **you** need to do for your child and then you think crap he's going to be here at 8:30 again in the morning and then I'm going to work and I'm not going to see him again until 3:30 and so it's a little bit more of not being told that you've got to do so much so often. It's more the school saying, this is what we've noticed and this is what we've put in place. Then we can go cool and then implement more stuff at home.*

> *Marama C: We have a good relationship with their (academic mentor).*

The comments which showed the feeling of whanau that the academic mentoring programmes in their respective schools allowed more of a partnership included:

> *Sandra C: I think that it's good that you get to sit in with your kids and the (academic mentor) to help them work out how to get to their goals.*

> *Huia R: I think it's nice now that parents and the school don't play that blaming game, there's none of that blaming, it's that link between.*

While student participants commented that they felt that the academic mentoring programmes meant that there was a lot of contact with whanau, they conveyed that

this contact was based around informing whanau of things students were not getting right. Comments included:

> *Karl R: Yeah, my (academic mentor) does contact them. They're real close to the teachers round here.*

> *Michaela R: They don't have contact with my parents, unless I do something wrong.*

> *Aroha C: Sometimes she (academic mentor) just comes in and sees my Mum.*

Apparent throughout the data collected from the school leaders, teachers and whanau is an appreciation of the improvement academic mentoring has made to the schools' contact with whanau. Added to this is the feeling that the contact is positive and has allowed partnerships to develop between the academic mentors and whanau which reflect mutual respect. Whanau and staff both expressed trust in each other. However, although the students recognise there is a lot of contact between whanau and the academic mentors they believe this is associated with whanau being informed of 'problems' with their behaviour or performance at school.

Question Four asked: What are the main challenges for the staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students?

The answers to this question are shown in Table 4.4, along with the number of responses from each participant group.

Table 4.4   Question 4: What are the main challenges for the staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students? Educational Leaders', Staff, Maori Students' and whanau data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	Leaders		Staff		Whanau		Students		Total
	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	
The time and commitment required from staff	1	1	3	4	1	2		1	13
Ongoing focused Professional Learning for academic mentors	1	1	3	4					9
Resourcing	1	1	2	2					6
The flexibility required	1	1	2	3					7
The inability of some staff to be effective academic mentors	1		2	1					4

The educational leaders recognised the challenges involved for staff associated with academic mentoring and both could highlight areas where they needed to do more. River School's educational leader commented on professional learning:

> *Probably that's an area that we do need to do more work in. Because for myself and some staff we come from that approach anyway but others I think might probably need more support in how to do that or keep that focus.*

Educational Leader Coast commented:

> *We do a huge amount of PD (professional development).*

The educational leaders were also both aware of the time and commitment issue for staff:

> *Educational Leader R: I think time. It's always the issue.*

> *Educational Leader C: We've definitely had to be more creative around use of our time.*

Other forms of resourcing were also seen as a challenge:

> *Educational Leader C: It is very, very heavy on staffing. It is a challenge to staff.*

The flexibility required from staff was also recognised:

> *Educational Leader R: I do think there has been some grumbles about it if I'm honest.*

> *Educational Leader C: Staff are still getting their heads around the concept. Some of our staff still need really tangible outcomes, they want to be told what to do and are struggling with – well you ask the question and you co-construct with your students what is important for them.*

The two educational leaders both discussed that staff were not all in the same place when it came to being effective academic mentors. One leader was much more explicit in explaining this.

> *Educational Leader C: We've had some who we've actually removed from being (academic mentors) because they missed it altogether. We worked really hard to get them support through the Dean and they pretty much still didn't get it and in our mind were our students getting the most out of that? No. Did we want to subject them to that? No. So we just said right we'll put you in another role doing something else. It's not suited to everybody.*

Educational Leader R was more diplomatic and I have not counted her response as it was not explicit, however her comment is still important to note:

> *I wouldn't like to say that everyone's in the same place at all.*

Staff identified the same five challenges as the educational leaders but the challenge of ongoing, focused professional learning for academic mentors and the time and commitment required from staff were the dominant issues. While most staff felt positive about professional learning, gaps were recognised:

> *Belinda R: We did have quite an intensive training and information session right at the start when it was first introduced. Well you would have missed that Susan. Every year it gets refined, it changes, depending on people's input, I guess.*
>
> *Mania C: Depends what the need is in the school, they always ask, we have to reflect a lot because this is new and they do understand it's tricky. Some teachers are doing okay but there are some that are struggling.*

The time and commitment required from staff was also a dominant issue:

> *Matthew R: Time, it chews up time. Being an (academic mentor) the consequence is there is going to be more work for you.*
>
> *Susan R: I just find, most of my parents I have to contact in the evening. One parent often rings me at 9pm at night and I'm like oh goodness.*
>
> *Valerie C: I'd say the main thing is the prep time cause we were all thrown in the deep end and that probably caused more negative feelings than were necessary.*

Other forms of resourcing were also recognised by staff:

> *Valerie C: Who is going to be paying for the actual resources to use in (academic mentoring)?*
> *Mania C: Yeah so it has its own budget not from other curriculum areas.*

The flexibility required to be an academic mentor was also discussed. Some of the comments included:

> *Judith R: You can't say oh sorry we've got goal setting today and that's what we're doing. So you need to have that flexibility to deal with things as they crop up.*

The inability of some staff to be effective academic mentors was discussed by three staff members:

> *Valerie C: The people who don't work as (academic mentors) quite often are the ones that ...*
> *Mania C: Struggle with relationships.*
> *Valerie C: Yeah, they struggle with relationships so they're not necessarily the best fit for our kids.*

> *Matthew R: If the staff member doesn't buy in it doesn't work, it just doesn't work and there are staff members that don't buy in, they don't. They get through it for a lack of better words, they treat it like a chore and they don't have the relationship with the kids.*

All but one whanau recipient recognised the time and commitment academic mentoring required from staff:

> *Sandra C: That was the extra mile taken by our (academic mentor), that's just how special she is.*

> *Jane R: I don't know how much pressure it (being the one point of contact for whanau) puts on them.*

> *Huia R: I know even with my nephews I've had teachers go round to his place and say you need to get this done. We're going to take this weekend. And I'm thinking this is a teacher giving up his weekend.*

One student also recognised the time and commitment put in by staff with Tui from River School stating:

> *She like, goes the extra mile as well she doesn't just do her job description.*

The data collected from the school leaders, teachers, whanau and students highlighted recognition of the significant time and commitment required by staff to make academic mentoring successful for Maori students. This recognition has added to the respect and trust the whanau feel towards the academic mentors of their children. Understandably whanau and students were less knowledgeable about the challenges for staff. Both school leaders and teachers identified the need for ongoing professional learning for academic mentors, resourcing and the flexibility required by staff as difficulties. However, none of these were seen as insurmountable, they were just presented as issues that need to be recognised and addressed. The final difficulty was mentioned by one school leader and three teachers; the inability of some staff to be academic mentors. It was noticeable that when this was mentioned by the teacher from River School and the two teachers at Coast School the other teachers nodded but did not contribute to the conversation. These data, therefore, may suggest that teachers find it difficult to criticise each others' ability to be academic mentors but this is an area where schools who implement academic mentoring may need support. Removing those who struggle, as Coast School did, is an option but it places increased pressure on the other teachers.

Question Five asked: What are the successes experienced by staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students?

The responses to this question and their frequency are shown in the table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5   Question 5: What are the successes experienced by staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students? Educational leaders', staff, Maori Students' and whanau data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	*Leaders*		*Staff*		*Whanau*		*Students*		*Total*
	C	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	
Students are more engaged with learning	*1*	*1*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*2*		*2*	*13*
Better relationships with students	*1*	*1*	*4*	*4*	*1*	*2*	*1*	*2*	*16*
Better whanau engagement	*1*	*1*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*2*			*10*
Academic mentoring supports good school structures			*2*	*4*		*2*			*8*

The educational leaders felt that one of the successes for staff who participate in the academic mentoring programme involving Maori students is that the students are more engaged with their learning:

> *Educational Leader R: I think the students are grateful for the help and they're reflecting on their goals.*

The educational leader of Coast School outlined how better engagement meant students took more responsibility for their learning:

> *The requirement is that the student put their name up, what their intention is, what their success criteria will look like and how I will know that you are working on what you said you would.*

Both also recognised that staff and Maori students had built strong relationships because of the academic mentoring programme:

Educational Leader C: They (students) have someone that cares. I get quite emotional about it, because they do they just know that someone has their back and they trust that person.

Educational Leader R: If you can do anything to make a kid feel that they matter and they belong and they can then you have to give it a go.

The educational leaders both referred to whanau engagement, however one saw it as a definite success while the educational leader of River School saw it as an area that needed more work:

I think we (staff) need to bring the parents into things earlier than we do and make sure they're informed and part of it.

The educational leader of Coast School stated:

I definitely think it's them (whanau) just feeling they know who to go to and they feel that they can ask those questions.

Staff also felt that having academic mentors meant they experienced more success with students being engaged with their learning:

Eloise C: They're quicker than me. I give them the pen and they're up there like ten feet tall.
Natalie C: It's about us keeping up at the minute.
Eloise C: Yeah it is, and them showing each other, it's just such a lovely environment to be in. It feels good.

Judith R: There's one Maori student in my group whose attendance was very poor last year and very casual. So as a team we've all kind of pulled together and he's become very responsible and an attendance that was in the low 70s is now in the 90s. So that's having a huge effect on the results and work done in class.

Paul R: I think it's got a lot to do with the size of the group. I can remember back to Maori kids sometimes use to get lost in the crowd, sometimes quite happily get lost in the crowd, do their own thing. Whereas in a smaller group they get involved.

They also felt that the academic mentoring programmes allowed for positive relationships with students:

Eloise C: It's about making those connections, it's about relationships.

Judith R: The rewards for it are just, immeasurable really. It's just invaluable that rapport that I have with the kids.

They also outlined that it was a benefit having greater whanau engagement:

> *Valerie C: I think we get included in more stuff too, like strengthening families.*

> *Mania C: Even our profile in the community. I think it's changed in the last couple of years. It was sort of a negative profile.*

> *Judith R: They (whanau) email me immediately they feel there is the slightest thing not right. I mean they're just okay to ask you anything and everything.*

Staff also indicated that they felt the academic mentoring programme fitted in well to their schools' structures and that made a more successful experience for them:

> *Paul R: It's (academic mentoring) coordinated with the other systems in the school. It's coordinated with pastoral care and it's coordinated with careers and it's all part of the big picture, it's not little silos of everyone doing their own little thing, it's got a direction and a purpose.*

> *Natalie C: We've sort of got a structure and a programme running.*

Whanau also felt that a success for staff involved in the academic mentoring programme was student engagement with learning:

> *Jane R: He was at school with those Year 9 and 10 students at the end of the year when all the other students were on study leave you know. But he did it.*

They also discussed that the academic mentors had good relationships with the students which they believed would be a benefit for staff and students:

> *Sandra C: I've seen it, a couple of girls that are in my girl's (academic mentoring) group having heart to hearts with their (academic mentor).*

> *Jane R: I can see my son's (academic mentor) and my nephews know them inside out and back the front.*

They also commented that they believed the increase in whanau engagement with staff would be a success for staff:

> *Huia R: Her (academic mentor) would approach me and I felt I had a handle on all of her classes.*

> *Jane R: And you do find that they approach you anywhere. So as a parent you get to know that (academic mentor) as well.*

> *Marama C: She (academic mentor) advises the parents of what is going on and what is going to happen. Yeah they're pretty onto it in my experience.*

Whanau from River School also conveyed that they felt the academic mentoring programmes supported good school structures and they felt it was a success that they were confident about how the structures worked:

> *Jane R: You've got your (academic mentor), you've got your Dean, and the roles and responsibilities are very clear cut and as parents you know who you can go and speak to.*

Two students from River School mentioned students being more engaged with their learning and strong staff relationships with students, while one student from Coast school mentioned staff relationships with students as being a success for staff involved in the academic mentoring programme. An example of student engagement was:

> *Natasha R: It's good because if I'd gone back to (another school), I didn't even have my Level 1 at the beginning of the year and now I've got my Level 2.*

The recognition of the relationships built by staff and their impact is shown by:

> *Anaru C: I like my (academic mentor).*

> *Lance R: My (academic mentor) phones me sometimes and makes sure I don't forget things. She'll make sure I don't forget anything. Yeah she's pretty cool.*

The data collected expressed that school leaders, staff, whanau and students believed staff involved with academic mentoring were experiencing better relationships with Maori students and Maori students were more engaged with learning. Overall participants felt staff had a positive impact through academic mentoring. School leaders, teachers and whanau also conveyed a belief that staff were benefitting from better whanau engagement. Once more, there appeared to be a gap here between the adult and student perception as this was not an area identified by the students. Finally a success identified by staff and two whanau participants, was the way that academic mentoring supported good school structures.

Question Six asked: What have been the major benefits for Maori Students associated with academic mentoring?

The responses to this question are shown in Table 4.6, along with the number of responses.

Table 4.6   Question 6: What have been the major benefits for Maori Students associated with academic mentoring? Educational leaders', Staff, whanau and Maori Students' data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	Leaders		Staff		Whanau		Students		Total
	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	
High expectations being set for each student	1	1	3	4	1	2	1	5	18
Students feeling a sense of belonging and being valued	1	1	4	3	1	2	2	4	18
Whanau being involved with their schooling	1	1	5	4	1	2	2	3	19

The educational leaders felt that the students were benefiting from high expectations being set for individuals with the educational leader of River School stating:

> *Letting them (students) know that we're here to support them but also that we expect them to achieve.*

The educational leader of Coast School commented:

> *Consistency around us (the school) having high expectations of you (the student.*

The two educational leaders also conveyed that they felt it was a benefit that students felt like they belonged and that they were valued:

> *Educational Leader R: Everybody is important and everybody's learning is important.*

> *Educational Leader C: It is around valuing them as an individual and them feeling valued.*

They also identified the importance of whanau being involved for students:

> *Educational Leader R: We really, really pushed the parent and whanau and student and (academic mentor) to sit down and look at career goals and things like that.*

> *Educational Leader C: Having the half day huis and having (academic mentors) speak around what academic mentoring is and having the students present their goals back to their parents.*

Staff could also see the benefits of high academic expectations with comments such as:

> *Judith R: I think for me it's to get the best out of students that they are capable of.*

> *Valerie C: We do credit checking, credit tracking that sort of thing. Just making sure that if they need (to be doing something) we introduce them to it or push them into it.*

> *Mania C: So we as teachers we are made accountable.*

Staff also felt that it was a benefit to Maori students that they felt a sense of belonging and being valued:

>*Eloise C: They're not just numbers here.*

>*Matthew R: You just work out what is going to work for that kid.*

>*Valerie C: They (the students) know I will always back them or I will always have their back. And some of the time that means running meetings between teachers and parents or whatever, it's just them knowing.*

It was also clear that staff felt it was a benefit for students having their whanau involved in their schooling:

>*Natalie C: J knows that I'm going to be calling Mum and Dad to talk about it. It's just having that feeling that we're all on the same page.*

>*Valerie C: I think, well I find anyway that maybe the families trust the school's opinion a bit more.*

>*Susan R: They (whanau) see you as the first port of call.*

Whanau participants felt that the academic mentors conveying high expectations to individual students was positive:

>*Huia R: The (academic mentor) keeps an eye on where they are and can monitor them so it's kind of like they end up being the Whaea for that whanau.*

>*Jane R: The (academic mentor) knows when they (Maori students) are underachieving and when to push them.*

>*Marama C: I think it's made a big difference for my kids, like my boys because they are getting that extra time to finish off what they need to do. If they are behind in work or they need to catch up there is that (academic mentoring) time for them to do it in.*

Whanau could also identify the importance for the students of feeling valued and the sense of belonging:

>*Sandra C: I think for my boys it is confidence he's gained from being in that whanau environment.*

>*Huia R: They have a sense of belonging.*

All of the whanau participants felt it was a benefit for their child for them to be involved in their schooling:

>*Huia R: You can just go straight to their (academic mentor) and have any issues dealt with.*

>*Jane R: What we hold as being strong values and morals within a Maori Tikanga concept is similar to what the school has. It's woven together. I think it's something the school does really well to draw in parents from all walks of life.*

The student participants also saw the high expectations that were set for them as individuals as a benefit:

>*Tui R: She (academic mentor) knows what I want to do. She'll look at my individual plan and help me with the right track to go.*
>*Karl R: She'll (academic mentor) make me do the work, but make it good for me.*

>*Anaru C : They talk to your teachers about your goals.*

The students were also aware of feeling valued and belonging:

>*Anaru C: They want the best for us.*
>*Aroha C: We are like a family.*

>*Tui R: I think this school, like they really care about each individual student and where they are going. So not everybody wants to become a doctor, some want to be mechanics and stuff ... the (academic mentor) gets everyone knowing who needs help and which way they are going and stuff. I think maybe they just care a bit more.*

>*Karl R: This school is pretty good about that, wanting you to succeed.*

They also identified that it was of benefit to them to have their parents involved in their schooling:

>*Tui R: I think whanau support is a big one (benefit).*

>*Lance R: They ring up Dad if I wag.*

>*Anaru C: The (academic mentors) contact my Mum.*

Noticeable throughout the data collected from the school leader, staff, whanau and Maori students is significant agreement around the perceived benefits academic mentoring offers Maori students. All participant groups identified the setting of high expectations for each student, while expressing appreciation that the expectations needed to be appropriate for the individual. Equally important was the benefit of Maori students feeling valued and a sense of belonging at the school. The sense of being

in a whanau environment and that Maori students were cared for and supported was spoken of by all participant groups. While academic mentoring was focused on academic achievement, the way a student felt at school was highly valued. All of the participant groups also identified whanau being involved in their children's schooling as a benefit for the Maori students. The students were aware of this involvement but they felt it was about whanau being notified if there were 'problems' and how this modified behaviour. Although, academic mentoring was started at both schools to improve academic performance, the greatest benefits for Maori students, seems to be the focus on the individual being challenged in a safe, caring environment which values and includes their whanau.

Question Seven asked: What have been the major difficulties for Maori students associated with academic mentoring?

The responses and frequency of responses are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7   Question 7: What have been the major difficulties for Maori students associated with academic mentoring? Educational leaders', Staff, whanau and Maori Students' data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	**Leaders**		**Staff**		**Whanau**		**Students**		**Total**
	C	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	*C*	*R*	
The experience is dependent on who the academic mentor is	1	1	3	2	2		2	2	13
At times the students find the academic mentoring time boring			1	4	2		2	5	14

The educational leaders both identified the student experience of academic mentoring being dependent on who their academic mentor was:

> *Educational Leader R: I would think it (the experience) depends largely on the (academic mentor).*

> *Educational Leader C: They (some staff) just saw it as an opportunity to have the kids do what they want to with no structure.*

Staff commented on inconsistencies in the programme depending on who the academic mentor was:

> *Valerie C: There are inconsistencies between (academic mentors) in terms of activities, expectations, follow up. Not so much anymore but when it was just starting there would be the (academic mentors) who would let the kids go outside and play games or they'd be playing games on the computer or that*

sort of thing which makes it hard for everybody else. ... I would rather have 18 kids in my (academic mentoring group) than have certain teachers having a group who shouldn't.

Matthew R: As a Dean we try to target those teachers who are struggling and a lot of them have turned around, but definitely the more the (academic mentor) puts into it, the better the outcomes. Some teachers have got a lot on their plate and I sympathise, but if they don't buy in it doesn't work. That's common sense.

They were also aware that some students found some of the time spent in academic mentoring boring:

Matthew R: You've got to have the paperwork, don't get me wrong and some of it is really valuable but just don't overdo it.
Susan R: Yeah they (the students) start to resent it.
Matthew R: It just becomes a class then. They really resist it.
Paul R: That's especially true in Year 10.
Susan R: Yeah
Matthew: You say get out your books and they're all like ahh, you've got to be careful and find the balance.
Paul R: Find the variation.

Natalie C from Coast School also commented:

Some people (academic mentors) find it difficult to keep their Year 9 to Year 13 occupied for that length of time.

The whanau at River School could not think of any difficulties for Maori students associated with academic mentoring. In fact when asked this question their response was:

Huia R: You're always going to have those parents who are not liking it, but you're going to have that no matter what it is.
Jane R: Even those negatives, the school is open and does their best to ensure most avenues are checked out.
Jane R: I would say (academic mentors) are another pivotal person involved in the upbringing of your child and I know there's controversy around that, schools are there to bring up your children but in this day and age they are that pou.

While still positive about academic mentoring in their school the whanau participant Sandra C at Coast school commented on how the academic mentoring programme would be:

Slightly different (for each child) depending on who they got.

This discussion between Sandra C and Marama C from Coast school also highlights why some students might get bored:

> Marama C: Some kids like to run away from their (academic mentor).
> Sandra C: One of the challenges that I see for the kids is that some of the (academic mentors) don't have anything for them to do. Um I hear some kids moaning that they just go there and sit and that's like 100 minutes, that's a long time.

Four of the Maori student participants were aware that academic mentors were different and did things differently. For some this was seen as a difficulty, others did not seem to think it was an issue:

> Tui R: I've never done any of that!

> Aroha C: Some groups do more outdoors stuff.
> Anaru C: Mine doesn't get to do that so often, only when it's house comp.

> Karl R: Sometimes the (academic mentor) is the biggest difficulty, because he's too strict.

All of the Maori student participants felt that at times the academic mentoring programme could be boring:

> Natasha R: Sometimes it's real boring there is nothing to do and it is too long sometimes.

> Anaru C: Sometimes it can get boring if there is too much writing. Sometimes there is a lot of mucking around.

The data collected from the school leaders, staff, Maori students and whanau from Coast School outlined awareness that the academic mentoring experience is dependent on who the academic mentor is. This finding could be a double edged sword. While it is desirable for Maori students to all have positive experiences, enforcing a standardised programme would not allow for the individual approach and relationship building which has been successful for many students. The schools have both avoided the one-size-fits all approach to these programmes. Staff, whanau from Coast School and Maori students identified that another difficulty for Maori students was that, at times, the academic mentoring programme is boring. This may be because of attempts to standardise paperwork or it could be because of the 'down-time' for some students when individual mentoring is occurring. These data could suggest that to improve the experience for all Maori students schools need to be

provided with support to up-skill the academic mentors who are struggling. This may be with relationship building, culturally responsive pedagogy or providing activities that are engaging. Neither of the schools involved in the project have had extra funding provided for introducing the academic mentoring programme. The challenge for the ministry is to discover how to support schools to develop academic mentors who are able to provide the benefits while minimising the difficulties associated with academic mentoring. The people who could do this may already be within the schools but there needs to be resourcing to provide the release time for the staff up-skilling to occur.

The school leaders identified the first difficulty but not the second. They were very aware of the perceived challenges facing the staff involved with academic mentoring, but not as clear around the perceived difficulties facing the Maori students.

Question Eight asked: What advice would you give to a school who was considering implementing an academic mentoring programme?

This question elicited many different responses. These responses and there frequency are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Question 8: What advice would you give to a school who was considering implementing an academic mentoring programme? Educational leaders', Staff, whanau and Maori Students' data (C=Coast School; R=River School)

Response data	Leaders		Staff		Whanau		Students		Total
	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	
See students as individuals	1	1	2	3	2	2		2	13
Involve whanau	1	1				2		1	5
Have good systems and structures	1	1	1	3					6
Involve staff			2	2					4
Context is important	1	1							2

The educational leaders voiced their belief in seeing students as individuals and the fact that this was less about a programme than a way of thinking and being with students. The educational leader at Coast School said:

> (*Academic mentoring) has become really based around; what is important for that student at that time. So it is really student focused around what are their needs and around relationships.*

The educational leader as River School stated:

> *So this isn't a silver bullet, it's like a whole way of working with one student at a time.*

They also recognised the importance of involving whanau with the educational leader from Coast School advising:

> *To make this work I think you need whanau engagement. I think having a really good understanding of what our whanau want for their students has got to be the driving force behind everything that we do.*

Both educational leaders discussed the need for good systems and structures being set up and developed in the school for the academic mentoring programme to work:

> *Educational Leader C: I think having systems in place, the deaning system has been huge, really huge. We changed it because we needed structure.*

> *Educational Leader R: I mean changing the focus, from guidance, to learning, to pastoral support were all next steps. It's about how we can continue and keep developing.*

There was also an awareness from the educational leaders that context is important when developing a new programme for a school. The educational leader from Coast School said she would advise any school looking at an academic mentoring programme:

> *Not to try and fit into what another school is doing. It's got to be specific to your school and what works.*

Staff participants also mentioned seeing students as individuals as important:

> *Natalie C: They know that you are there for them. Build that relationship with them and then work on their stuff that they need help with.*

> *Judith R: It's constant and ongoing.*
> *Belinda R: It's one student at a time.*
> *Judith R: Yep it's one student at a time.*
> *Matthew R: One student at a time.*

Staff were clear about the need to have good systems and structures in place:

> *Natalie C: I think if you structure it properly a hundred minutes is nothing.*

> *Judith R: I think it is really important to have very clear pathways, like if you are out of your depth who to go to and who the support people are, who you refer your students to. Don't take it all on board yourself but say look this bigger than I can take on and this is who I suggest you see about this. So have those clear pathways.*

> *Matthew R: If I was giving advice to a school it would be set up your monitoring systems first. If you haven't got those systems behind you you're going to have nothing different to the old form class, nobody looking at the big picture.*

It was also mentioned by staff that they believed any school looking at implementing an academic mentoring programme needed to involve staff in the discussion and set up:

> *Mania C: You need that pre korero (with staff).*

> *Paul R: Get your staff on board, sell it to them, it's got to be sold.*

Whanau from both schools felt that seeing students as individuals was important for any school considering an academic mentoring programme:

> *Jane R: That was adjusted to him and his needs, his personality. It wasn't something that she did with lots of kids. It was because of his personality.*

> *Huia R: Just look at the child, or the young person as a young person so when it comes to the whole Maori thing it's not, it's just there you (the Maori student) are standing there.*

> *Sandra C: The (academic mentor) our boys have is one of the best in the school, she gives all her time, she helps them academic wise but if there is anything they need they can go to her.*

Whanau participants from River School also felt it was of value for schools to involve whanau in the academic mentoring programme. This was made clear by Huia R when she outlined that any school thinking about this approach:

> *Would need to have like the big whanau hui we had in the hall. They would need to get whanau and community feedback.*

Jane R agreed:

> *Hold those forums to educate the whanau and the community about what it is actually going to look like for the kids involved.*

The student participants from Coast School were surprised by this question and did not feel they could give advice. Anaru C stated:

> *I don't know what to say.*

However two students from River School commented on the importance of seeing students as individuals. They said:

> *Tui R: It's like a one on one thing. Try to find the back ground to all the kids cause lots do slip away and go under the radar and stuff but if you keep at them they can do well. Let students be who they are and know what they want to do.*

One student from River School could also identify that it was important to involve whanau:

> *Tui R: I think getting whanau support is a big one.*

The data in response to this question brought to light some diverse opinions. One area, however, that respondents from all the groups did agree on was the need for schools who are thinking of introducing academic mentoring programmes to see students as individuals. This would suggest that, in regards to Maori students, academic mentors would need to be practitioners of culturally-responsive pedagogy. Added to this the school leaders and some staff felt that it would be important for the schools to have spent time considering how their systems and structures would work with the programme. The school leaders, whanau from River School and one student recognised the need for schools to involve whanau. Significantly, rather than involving whanau, two staff from each school mentioned the importance of involving staff. Finally the two school leaders both identified the need for schools to be aware of the importance of context, to recognise that just transporting an academic mentoring programme from one school to another will not ensure success, in fact it will probably be a recipe for disaster.

Summary Of Findings

Refining the sub-themes findings into categories

In all, twenty-seven sub-themes were identified from the interviews and focus group data. These themes were grouped into four themes according to the way each sub-theme related to the academic mentoring programme for Maori students in schools. This was achieved in two ways: first by identifying the key words within the sub-theme; and, second, by understanding the sub-theme in relation to the question being asked. The thirty-nine sub-themes are presented in Table 4.9 in the order that the questions were asked. The table is divided into three columns. These columns identify the question number, the sub-themes and the categories.

Table 4.9   Questions sub-themes and their related themes

Q	Interview and focus group sub theme	Categories
1	To set goals and expectations	Academic Decision Making
	To have better academic knowledge of students	Academic Decision Making
	To build strong staff/ student relationships	Educating the Whole Child
	To create stronger links with whanau	Whanau Involvement
2	There are more informed conversations about subject selection	Academic Decision Making
	Subject selections are linked to pathways which are challenging	Academic Decision Making Educating the Whole Child
3	More whanau contact	Whanau Involvement
	More positive interactions with whanau	Whanau Involvement
	More of a partnership	Whanau Involvement
4	Ongoing focused professional learning for academic mentors	Sustainability
	The time and commitment required from staff	Sustainability
	Resourcing	Sustainability
	The flexibility required	Sustainability Educating the Whole Child
	The inability of some staff to be effective academic mentors	Sustainability Educating the Whole Child
5	Students are more engaged with learning	Academic Decision Making Educating the Whole Child
	Better relationships with students	Educating the Whole Child
	Better whanau engagement	Whanau Involvement
	Academic mentoring supports good school structures	Sustainability
6	High expectations being set for each student	Academic Decision Making Educating the Whole Child
	Students feeling a sense of belonging and being valued	Educating the Whole Child
	Whanau being involved in students' schooling	Whanau Involvement
7	The experience being dependent of who the academic mentor is	Sustainability Educating the Whole Child
	At times students finding the academic mentoring time boring	Educating the Whole Child
8	See students as individuals	Educating the Whole Child
	Involve whanau	Whanau Involvement Sustainability
	Involve staff	Sustainability
	Context is important	Sustainability

The re-organisation of the sub-themes by theme are outlined in Table 4.10 below. Where the sub-themes are repeated under the same theme, they are recorded only once.

Table 4.10 is a summary of the data findings and themes and shows which research questions are addressed by the themes. This has been done by colour coding the sub-themes to show which research questions they address. The research questions are:

1. Why have educational leaders in two secondary schools provided academic mentoring for Maori students?

2. How have two secondary schools implemented academic mentoring with Maori students?

3. What perceived benefits and difficulties have accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring?

This table will be used as the basis for the discussion of the findings in the next chapter.

Table 4.10   Reorganisation of sub-themes

Specific subthemes	Categories	Research Questions
To set goals and expectations To have better academic knowledge of students There are more informed conversations about subject selection Subject selections are linked to pathways which are challenging Students more engaged with learning High expectations being set for each student	Academic Decision Making	Questions 1, 2 and 3
To create stronger links with whanau More whanau contact More positive interactions with whanau More of a partnership Better whanau engagement Whanau being involved in students' schooling Involve whanau	Whanau Involvement	Questions 1, 2 and 3
Ongoing focused professional learning for academic mentors The time and commitment required from staff Resourcing The flexibility required The inability of some staff to be academic mentors Academic mentoring supports good school structures The experience is dependent on who the academic mentor is Involve staff Involve whanau Context is important	Sustainability	Questions 2 and 3

To build strong staff/student relationships Subject selections are linked to pathways which are challenging The flexibility required The inability of some staff to be academic mentors Students are more engaged with learning Better relationship with students High expectations being set for each student Students feel a sense of belonging and being valued The experience is dependent on who the academic mentor is At times the students finding the academic mentoring time boring Seeing students as individuals	Educating the Whole Child	Questions 1,2 and 3

Summary

The interdependency of these sub-themes and themes and the fact that they are linked together adds to the complexity of academic mentoring for Maori students. Table 4.10 makes the data appear ordered when in fact it is layered, complex and overlapping. For example the theme of "Educating the whole child" could have "Whanau involvement" included within it.

The two schools have academic mentoring programmes which appear to be effective for Maori students through creating a culture which builds relationships, includes whanau and values the individual student. To achieve this educational leaders have created a sustainable school culture which is student focused and they have worked with staff to tirelessly work with each child to ensure success.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the overall findings from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups data presented in the previous chapter.

The research questions provide the sub-headings in this chapter. The discussion for each question is completed under several sub-headings based on the themes that emerged from the data collection. These themes are displayed in Table 5.1 and are organised according to the research questions.

Table 5.1   Research questions and categories

Research Questions	1: Why have educational leaders in two secondary schools provided academic mentoring for Maori students?	2: How have two secondary schools implemented academic mentoring with Maori students?	3: What perceived benefits and difficulties have accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring?
Categories	Academic Decision Making, Whanau Involvement, Educating the Whole Child	Academic Decision Making, Whanau Involvement, Sustainability, Educating the Whole Child	Academic Decision Making, Whanau Involvement, Sustainability, Educating the Whole Child

Discussion of Findings Related to Research Questions

Research Question One asked:

Why have educational leaders in two secondary schools provided academic mentoring for Maori students?

This section will identify the key reasons the educational leaders held for implementing the academic mentoring programme in their school for Maori students. It will also identify how these relate to the literature.

Academic Decision Making

The study found that the desire to improve academic decision making through working with Maori students to set goals and high expectations was a significant factor for educational leaders when setting up academic mentoring programmes. The educational leaders in both schools were interested in having programmes which were based on sound academic knowledge of the students so a valid learning pathway

could be offered to each student. They saw academic mentoring for Maori students as a way to avoid Maori students selecting or being guided into less academic courses and experiencing teachers who have low expectations of them. These findings are reflected in the work of authors who examine the influence of low expectations of students by teachers, and the effect that this can have on student achievement. For example, Bishop and Berryman (2006) noted that Maori students required teachers to have high expectations of them to succeed. When speaking with students and whanau Bishop and Berryman (2006) heard many times how teachers low expectations' created anger and frustration for Maori students and their whanau. Maori students want "teachers to acknowledge and care for them as Maori and to set high standards and expect a lot of them" (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 269). Similarly Madjar et al. (2009) outlines the impact that low expectations from teachers can have on students' subject selection. They discuss how Maori students, especially those at low decile schools select or are guided into, less academic courses because of low teacher expectations, and how this limits their future choices. Meyer et al. (2009) also noted that low teacher expectations influenced student motivation and their desire to succeed and challenge themselves. This suggests that teachers who communicate low expectations to Maori students create a negative impact on their academic results and their sense of well being at school.

Both educational leaders offered the academic mentoring programme in their schools to allow Maori students to gain high quality data about their learning regularly. They believed that if these data were available and coupled with high expectations, the students had a greater chance of reaching their academic potential. This fits with the literature which suggests that to support Maori students to reach their academic potential, schools and teachers must reject deficit thinking and embrace an approach which focuses on Maori potential (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011; Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). To allow this to happen, the educational leaders who participated in the study recognised the need to have systems which provided detailed data on each student's learning. The educational leaders' approach aligns with research that suggests that "the notion of tracking students longitudinally over their secondary school career and using data to inform academic counselling and student subject choices deserves fuller consideration" (Madjar et al., 2009, p. 99). The literature supports this need and promotes academic mentoring being informed through high

quality data management and analysis to create meaningful conversations with students to avoid the compounding effects of poor choices and low expectations. These findings are consistent with the work of Hipkins et al. (2005) who found that students who make poor subject choices early in their secondary schooling are less like to go onto tertiary study. In addition, Madjar et al. (2009) found that Maori students were less likely to select academic subjects and they completed fewer credits from the approved list of subjects for university study.

The educational leader at River School was very clear that the academic mentoring programme was designed to make sure everyone was aware of where students were in regards to their learning. The educational leader at Coast School highlighted the focus the school had to put on up-skilling staff around keeping really good records on their student management system so that information was readily available.

Neither school offered academic mentoring exclusively to Maori students; at both schools it is a school wide initiative. Academic mentoring was not introduced as a programme focused on raising Maori student achievement alone. This being said, the educational leaders were aware of the need to reject preconceived ideas about what Maori students could achieve. They saw the introduction of academic mentoring as a way to end what Thrupp (2006) suggests is the school's role in sorting students into achievers and failures based on cultural characteristics, a role which supports the dominance of the predominantly white middle classes. This relates to the idea put forward by Bordieu (1986), that the cultural capital (forms of knowledge, skills, education and advantages that a person has, which gives them a higher status in society) of one group can be valued more highly than that of another. In New Zealand, history shows that Pakeha cultural capital has been highly valued in our schools while Maori cultural capital has been seen as a deficit. Through initiating the academic mentoring programmes in their schools educational leaders are trying to value Maori cultural capital. Through statements such as "My goal is 100% pass rates for Maori students. Every failure is a matter of concern, if it is less than 100% what are you saying, that is okay for some kids not to have a decent life", the educational leaders in this project are trying to address the educational debt owed to Maori students (created by years of poor educational policies) without incurring educational debt to any other group of students. The concept of an educational debt is introduced in the work of

Ladson-Billing (2006) and it outlines how the United States needs to approach the achievement gap between white and black Americans. It is a concept which reflects the ideas of the Waitangi Tribunal Report (1999) when it discusses the historical impact the assimilation policies in education have had on Maori achievement. The issue is not just about fixing an achievement gap; it is about repaying an educational debt.

Educational leaders and teachers from the schools involved in the project did not refer to their academic mentoring programmes as a way of addressing Ministry of Education directives around the academic achievement of Maori. Instead they focused on the academic decision making of individual students so that they could do their very best. In fact when approached to be part of this project the educational leader at River School warned me that I might not want to use her school as although their Maori achievement results were positive and well above the national averages she did not deal with Maori student achievement as the Ministry wanted her to. In addition the educational leader at Coast School was adamant that meeting and in most cases exceeding the Ministry targets was not the main objective of the academic mentoring programme. She stated clearly it was about the school facilitating success for individual students.

The educational leaders did not use a pedagogy based on ethnicity to address the academic success of their Maori students; they recognised, as suggested by Castagno and Brayboy (2008) that there is likely to be as much variation within Maori as there is between ethnic groups. When setting up the academic mentoring programmes each student's cultural needs were to be accommodated. This is supported by the research of Mahuika and Bishop (2008) which shows that the needs of Maori students need to be considered to ensure that good academic decisions can be made for them. The educational leaders at the two schools involved in the study also realised that understanding the cultural needs of their Maori students would necessitate involving their whanau.

Whanau Involvement

A key finding from the data collection was that both educational leaders had provided academic mentoring because they hoped it would create stronger links with whanau.

They did this as they believed it would help Maori students achieve. This is supported by the research which suggests that the way whanau and school relate to each other has a profound effect on Maori potential (Durie, 2011). Using the academic mentor as the first point of contact in the school for whanau was seen as a way of achieving a higher level of shared educational goals between home and school so that each student could be challenged to reach their full educational potential. This finding is acknowledged in the work of Castagno and Brayboy (2008) when they highlight how important the relationship between the school and the family is to indigenous students.

Whanau involvement is an area that both educational leaders felt they needed to do more work on. For the educational leader of River School it was clearly the next priority in the development of the academic mentoring programme. She felt Maori parents had been informed of why they had the academic programme and that they were more likely to make contact with them but she wanted the school to be more explicit in their inclusion of whanau. The educational leader of Coast School outlined how they had needed to stop at one stage of implementation of the academic mentoring programme because they realised they had not included whanau. This was collaborated by the whanau participants who said when it was first introduced they did not realise what the change was.

While big hui were held by both schools to introduce academic mentoring to their communities both are now working hard to make sure that regular contact is made between the academic mentors and whanau in ways that are more personal and focused on individual Maori students and their learning. Having a meeting between whanau, the academic mentor and the Maori student at least twice a year which asks for whanau input about their student's goals and pathway means whanau are included in the educational planning. While whanau involvement was seen at the outset as better contact, it is developing into better communication and the desire to create a partnership with parents. The literature supports the notion that increased whanau involvement leads to better outcomes for Maori students (Biddulph. F. et al., 2003; Durie, 2011; McKinley et al., 2009; Robinson et al., 2009) and this means that the continued focus on improving whanau involvement is critical to the success of academic mentoring for Maori students. Unfortunately, although the secondary schools used in this project did include whanau, one only did so later in the process; both schools saw inclusion as a time to inform whanau rather than involving them in

the design of the academic mentoring programme. In addition, all but one of the examples, where a meeting place and time was suggested by whanau, were of whanau being consulted by schools when and how they suggested. Traditional models of interaction with whanau were still the norm. Despite this the critiques given by the whanau of the academic mentoring programmes were limited. One set of whanau could not think of any criticisms while the other managed to suggest two. This is of concern as it may suggest that whanau are inadvertently adopting the dominant hegemony as a way of thinking. This is when an oppressed group takes on the dominant groups' thinking and ideas uncritically rather than critically examining whether or not their needs and aspirations are being met (G. Smith, 2003). Critical examination of the academic mentoring programme at the schools by whanau has the potential to strengthen its worth for Maori students.

Educating the Whole Child

The educational leaders at the two schools used in this project recognised that the academic mentoring programme needed to be built on good relationships between the mentors and the mentees. This is not to suggest that they did not think that their staff wanted good relationships with Maori students before introducing academic mentoring. However, as Bevan Brown (2003) states, although most teachers want the best for all their students they often do not fathom how important culture is to their learning and they have no idea how to address this issue.

Starting with building a relationship with each student in their academic mentoring group meant that staff were asked to avoid taking a one-size-fits-all approach to serve the needs of Maori students. As noted by Lawrence (2011) there is no recipe for dealing with Maori student achievement. Furthermore, Mahuika and Bishop (2008) point out that Maori students are not a homogenous group. When forming relationships with Maori students, staff at the respective schools are required to consider what it means to be culturally-responsive. The relationship is based on never giving up on the student and constantly looking for ways to engage the student; it requires the academic mentor to reject deficit thinking and accept, as Castagno and Brayboy (2008) suggest in their research, that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality. The relationship allows the academic mentor to: affirm the students' backgrounds; show an understanding of how the individual learners construct knowledge; show understanding of the students' lives; and use this knowledge to allow

learning to build on what they already know while challenging their intellect. These are all aspects which Villegas and Lucas (2002) found in their research support teachers being culturally responsive.

The understanding shown by the educational leaders of the importance of good relationships in regard to the successful implementation of academic mentoring was highlighted by the actions of Coast School when they removed some staff from the role. Academic mentoring is more than just implementing a programme; it is about building relationships. Research conducted by Bishop and Berryman (2006) showed that, for Maori students at secondary schools in New Zealand, building relationships was an important link to their academic success. Not allowing students to be subjected to mentors who do not show an interest in building a relationship is a brave step. An issue which may need to be further investigated is what considerations, if any, this raises for secondary schools around teachers' performance if they are not able to be academic mentors.

The educational leader of River School voiced some frustration over staff who did not feel passionately about the academic mentoring programme, in fact she saw working to achieve the best for each student as a moral obligation. This is supported by research which suggests that teachers' nurturing, having belief in and being interested in students improves their academic achievement (Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2007). The educational leaders understood what Villegas and Lucas (2002) highlighted in their research; that is, students depend on teachers to have their best interests at heart and to assist them to make sound educational decisions.

In summary, the findings related to this research question have established the need for educational leaders to make it a priority for the academic mentor and mentees to forge relationships based on high expectations, sound academic knowledge of the students, whanau involvement, trust and empathy, and sound cultural pedagogy. Whanau involvement must be a partnership based on creating the best possible outcomes for students. As Durie (2011) points out "the crisis approach to whanau involvement is not one that will induce a sense of enthusiasm for learning or for education" (p. 225). This is supported by Bishop and Berryman (2006) who urge secondary schools not to hark back to an education system that modelled schools knew best what students need, regardless of ethnicity. In doing so secondary schools

will be considering culturally-responsive approaches to teaching which incorporate teachers understanding how their students learn and affirming the views of students from diverse backgrounds (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Moreover, it is necessary for the academic mentoring programme to be built on trust and for it to focus on individual development (Rymer, 2002).

Research Question Two asked:

How have two secondary schools implemented academic mentoring with Maori students?

The key findings related to this question suggest four key themes that are important for implementing academic mentoring with Maori students. These themes are: Academic decision making; Whanau involvement; Sustainability; and Educating the whole child.

Academic Decision Making

When implementing the academic mentoring programmes the respective schools placed high value on what McKinley et al. (2009) identified as imperative for the success of such programmes - high quality data management and analysis to create meaningful conversations with students about their academic goals. These conversations were put in place to make sure Maori students were getting support with the 'here and now' work that needed to be completed and so they could select subjects appropriate to the pathways they had selected in consultation with their whanau and academic mentors; pathways that recognised their individual abilities. The pathways are selected to ensure that Maori students are challenging themselves and having high academic expectations set for them. This finding is corroborated by the research of Hipkins et al. (2005) who showed that poor subject choices have compounding effects on students' subsequent options at school and for future higher education.

Both schools implemented academic mentoring programmes that focused heavily on goal setting, especially academic goal setting. It was recognised that Maori students may find it difficult to see the long term implications of their subject choices. This is supported by the work of Madjar et al. (2009). Therefore the academic mentor's role was seen as being one of continually opening up the conversation about learning. It was hoped that these conversations would help Maori students feel more informed so

they would academically challenge themselves and become more engaged in the learning process. Added to this was the expectation that teachers would communicate high expectations to each student. These high expectations were to be informed by academic data so that the students were not receiving generic messages, but an individualised message about what was expected of them. This fits with the research which suggests that teachers who communicate low expectations create a negative impact and that there is no single recipe for success with Maori students (Lawrence, 2011; Meyer et al., 2009).

The implementation of the academic mentoring programmes was accompanied by a message that while the focus was on learning, the mentoring groups were there to create a sense of community where what was best for learning was more important than rules, strategies and recipes. This idea is reflected in Noddings (2006) research which suggests that educating the whole child requires more than a narrow focus on academia. At each of the schools every student's learning was viewed as important and the conversations were not to be staff 'lecturing' at students but staff learning to listen. The academic mentors were encouraged to show, through their acts and attitudes, what Noddings (2006) suggests is necessary for learning to occur - that they care about their students and that they are partners in their students' search for knowledge. Good academic decision making was implemented with Maori students because the academic mentoring process allowed power sharing, an element Bishop and Berryman (2006) identified as necessary for Maori student success.

At River School it was felt by staff, students and whanau that the conversations that were occurring in the academic mentoring programme and the systems put in place around careers counselling were impacting on Maori students' subject choice. The staff at Coast School conveyed that this was not as widespread at their school and, while they felt they had examples of this, it was not yet the norm. River School implemented their academic mentoring programme over five years ago whereas Coast School introduced it two and a half years ago. It would seem that River School educational leaders have done what is suggested by McKinley et al. (2009) in that they have developed strategies to develop, maintain and enhance the conversations held with the academic mentors to ensure good academic decision making. They are, understandably, more advanced in this area than Coast School, but the fact that staff

are beginning to notice changes for individual students bodes well for future development.

Whanau Involvement

The second theme to emerge from the participant data is that when implementing an academic mentoring programme which includes Maori students, a school must involve whanau if the programme is to be effective. This theme is consistent with the literature reviewed. The work of Biddulph. F. et al. (2003) highlights that genuine collaboration between the home and school can significantly lift academic achievement. This is also supported by Te Puni Kokiri (2010) who advocate for whanau and parents to be actively included in their child's education. Similarly Durie (2011) stated that, "whanau and schools need to work together to improve Maori educational outcomes" (p. 233). To involve whanau the respective schools focused on making more frequent contact with whanau, making it easier for whanau to contact the school, improving the contact by making it 'data rich', sharing the positive, and concentrating on forming a partnership with whanau so they felt involved in their child's educational plan.

To make sure that whanau were contacted frequently Coast School academic mentors had to make contact with their mentees' whanau by a certain date each term. This needed to be a face-to-face or phone conversation, and the fact that it had been done was reported to the educational leader in charge of the programme. This ensures that the experience of contact with the school is provided at regular intervals and whanau are not confronted with a one off experience which McKinley et al. (2009) suggest could leave them confused and concerned. Teachers, whanau, staff and students at River School also commented that contact between the school and whanau was frequent. This contact was not, however, as structured as at Coast School.

Whanau participants from Coast School and River School felt that with the implementation of the academic mentoring programme it was easier for them to make contact with the school. Staff from both schools reiterated that they felt they had more contact with parents. Whanau felt they had been included in discussions about their child's education, and that they were informed and valued as part of the process. The whanau participants also expressed that they felt the discussions they had with the academic mentors were based on sound information, good data and a confident understanding of the NCEA system, including the implications of subject choices.

These are all elements that Madjar et al. (2009) described as necessary for schools to build meaningful relationships with whanau in regards to students' subject selection.

While the educational leaders, staff and whanau at both schools felt that the interaction between the school and whanau was more positive with the introduction of the academic mentoring programme, Maori students from both schools still described the contact as being about academic mentors contacting home if they had an 'issue' to discuss. This could be because these conversations were the ones they learned about or it could indicate that there is still some work for the schools to do in conveying to students the positive messages that are being conveyed to whanau. This may indicate a gap in the perceptions and understandings of the adults and the students that might usefully be addressed in the future.

Whanau and staff from both Coast School and River School described a relationship between the school and whanau which was more like a partnership. One whanau participant even mentioned that she was happy the 'blame game' had stopped. The positive interactions and the feeling of a partnership mirrors the suggestion by Durie (2011) of placing students at the centre of the conversations, and having whanau and teachers working together with high expectations to create a system to support them. It is also endorsed by the work of Bishop (2011) who encourages educational leaders and schools to involve whanau. The staff participants did not talk about whanau involvement and then lament the lack of it. They spoke positively about whanau they do have contact with and looked at what they could do to improve contact with those with whom they were having trouble connecting. One staff member stated that she felt they were making headway with those who felt they had nothing to offer the school and that they were giving the message that all whanau are valued. This level of whanau involvement does, however, place large demands on the staff involved in the programme and its sustainability.

Sustainability

Fortunately both of the schools involved in the study recognised the need for the academic mentoring programmes in their schools to be sustainable long term. This finding is supported by researchers. Hughes and Karp (2004) noted that short term

mentoring programmes were not effective. This finding is supported by Larose et al. (2012) who established that the effects of mentoring were not found to be significant among young people if the programme was short term (less than 12 months).   To support an academic mentoring programme being sustainable researchers suggest ongoing supervision of mentors and good professional development (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; McKinley et al., 2009). Both schools have implemented, focused professional learning for their academic mentors. The two schools have weekly programmes where groups of teachers meet to plan and discuss how best to support the students and to provide resources for the academic mentors.

The resourcing of consumables such as printed material, coloured paper and stationery was a point of difference between the schools. While River School staff seemed relaxed about making consumables for their academic mentoring groups there was some angst among Coast School staff about whose budget such equipment came out of. This is an area that may need some thought when implementing an academic mentoring programme to avoid unnecessary stress for the staff involved. The resourcing of time had been considered at both schools but appeared to be very dependent on teachers' goodwill and their desire to do the best for their students.

At both schools the daily meetings of the academic mentor with their mentees was in place of traditional 'Form Time'. The additional time was part of the staffs' scheduled contact time. River School was a little different in that they had academic mentors who were not teachers. These staff had the hours of contact included in their contracts. The time and commitment required from staff to make academic mentoring work was recognised by participants from all of the interview and focus groups. Implementing the academic mentoring programme had increased the staff workload and yet they all remained committed to it. This highlights the claim by McKinley et al. (2009) that teachers will often accept an increase in work load if they are confident that student outcomes are being improved. However, this may be an area that those who provide funding need to consider if they want academic mentoring to become more widespread.

An area recognised by both schools as important to supporting staff when implementing an academic mentoring programme is its integration with the school's structures. The two academic mentoring programmes are not the same. One

programme groups students in year groups vertically, the other groups them horizontally. Weekly time allocation for the programme is different at each school. At River School all staff can be involved in the programme, not just teachers. However, both schools have clear structures in place to support staff so they are provided timely, up to date academic information on their students. The schools both recognise that an academic mentor should work with a smaller group than the traditional form class, and provide staff with Deans who meet regularly with any students that academic mentors refer to them because they need assistance with behavioural issues. The schools actively encourage their guidance department and outside agencies to work with academic mentors who need help supporting their students. Researchers have warned schools of how destructive lack of continuity and the "attempt, attack abandon, cycle" can be when implementing new programmes (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Knight, 2009a). The academic mentoring programmes in this research have been given the highest priority in their respective schools. Structures which support the academic mentoring programmes have thrived and those which have not have been modified. This has assured continuity and that staff feel confident that the academic mentoring programme is worth working on.

The senior leaders in the schools used in this research have ensured that there are strategies to develop, maintain, evaluate and enhance the academic mentoring programmes. Hence, they have developed ways the research suggests will help the academic mentoring programmes becoming embedded, nourished and sustained (McKinley et al., 2009; Timperley et al., 2007). This has meant involving staff in the process of implementation. River School staff spoke openly of their involvement and the way they could influence the development of the programme on a yearly basis. Coast School staff felt they had not been included enough in the discussion around the initial implementation but conveyed that they were now being heard and that they could influence how the programme was developing. The academic mentoring programmes were not set in place and then blindly adhered to. Both schools used evaluations from staff as suggested by Rhodes and DuBois (2008), both oral and written, to ensure that the concerns and suggestions held by staff could be considered. The schools developed programmes for their context.

It is not possible to transfer one academic mentoring programme from one school to another. Participants from all of the focus groups and interviews identified how special

their programme was. It was seen as special because it fitted the needs of the community. The educational leader of Coast School spoke candidly about how important it was to meet the needs of the specific students at the school. This is reflected in the literature which has found that New Zealand secondary schools differ markedly, and the sustainability of programmes is affected by many factors such as ethnic mix and the leadership (Hipkins et al., 2004; Madjar et al., 2009). The schools involved in this study have avoided what Thrupp (2007) describes as a simplistic, one size fits all approach to organisational change which ignores that effective leadership and teaching in one context is not the same in another. Just as the schools value the differences of individual students, they value their unique qualities as schools.

Educating the Whole Child

When implementing the academic mentoring programme the two schools in the study were cognisant of the fact that this was about more than just a programme. They understood that for academic mentors to have the types of conversations they wanted with Maori students they were going to have to know the Maori students well. The focus was going to have to be on building relationships and having a one-on-one focus to engage the Maori students and encourage them to try new things. The academic mentoring programme needed to be flexible and focus on individual student needs. It needed to be about educating the whole child not just providing academic support. This is supported by the literature which suggests that the most frequently noted difference between indigenous epistemologies and those of the dominant group is the holistic nature of the indigenous (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). While whanau and Maori students were pleased to see academic success they also spoke about the need for students to feel comfortable. One whanau member commented that she felt the academic mentoring programme was working for Maori students because it reflects "what we hold as being strong values and morals within a Maori Tikanga concept, they've drawn from that". Durie (2011) found in his research that success for Maori was not just about NCEA results. Whanau wanted their students to be well prepared for life, have a balance between work and recreation, understand civic responsibility and participate with whanau and friends. The academic mentoring programmes at both schools recognised that school is a preparation for students' futures; it is not an end in itself.

While both schools still had timetables there seemed to be flexible approaches to student learning. The student participants from River School not only talked about their subjects being changed but having more time in one subject compared to another if it met their needs. At Coast School the students were pleased that at mentoring time they not only did tasks set by the academic mentor but that they could choose to complete work or get help with work they were struggling with. Both whanau from Coast School commented on how much this had helped their children. This shows the school is sharing power with the Maori students, encouraging culturally responsive pedagogy and valuing the individual qualities that Maori students bring to school. These findings reflect the work of Bishop and Berryman (2006) who noted the importance of teachers sharing power with Maori students.   Similarly Durie (2011) points out the necessity of valuing the beliefs Maori students bring to school while Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggest that for indigenous students to have their beliefs valued teachers would need to practice being culturally responsive in schools.

Maori students are not seen as having deficits within these schools. Instead the schools have looked closely at themselves and thought about how they can engage students and make them feel confident to try new things. This is an approach supported by the research (Mahuika & Bishop, 2008). A whanau participant from Coast School attributed her Year 12 son's desire to join Kapa Haka for the first time to the confidence he had gained from participating in the academic mentoring programme. A student from River School discussed how their academic mentor made them share in their groups. One student participant from Coast School described her academic mentoring group as a whanau and a place where she felt safe. When these comments are placed alongside the high academic expectations the mentors hold for their mentees, it is clear that the programmes meet the four core qualities presented in chapter two from Miller (2008) for educating the whole child. These qualities are: encouraging experiential learning (more active engagement for students); valuing high quality personal relationship as much as academic subject matter; being concerned for the interior life of the students; and processing a world view that embraces diversity in nature and culture. The findings indicate that academic achievement for Maori students is an outcome of an academic mentoring programme that has mentors who are culturally responsive and genuinely value what individual students have to offer. This is in contrast to academic mentoring designed to make it easier to tick boxes for

reports on how Maori student achievement is being addressed in schools. This is a perception that may benefit schools if researched further.

When implementing the academic mentoring programme the two schools took different approaches to dealing with the inability of some staff to be effective academic mentors. At Coast School those identified as not being effective were removed from the role. The educational leader was clear that when the situation did not improve after intensive help the school valued the students and the programme too highly to jeopardise it. The numbers were small but the issue was confronted and dealt with. Teaching staff were aware that some teachers did not have academic mentoring roles and why but the students and whanau were not. This shows that the issue was dealt with sensitively. At River School there was an acceptance that some, albeit a very small minority, of academic mentors were not doing a good job. They too were offered support but there was not a clear direction to deal with this issue. This may suggest that more support needs to be offered to schools to upskill teachers, especially in areas which are not solely based on curriculum delivery. The literature would suggest that to engage with Maori students successfully as academic mentors some teachers may need to confront their own deficit theorising and look at how their own race, ethnicity, social class, language and gender shapes the way they view the world (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Staff will need varying amounts of support to be effective academic mentors and schools will need to consider what their approach will be if staff are unable to fulfil the role.

In summarising the findings in relation to Research Question Two, when implementing an academic mentoring programme which includes Maori students the research participants identified: the need for good academic information on each student to support the ongoing conversations around academic decision making; an inclusive approach to whanau which allowed a partnership; a focus on sustainable resourcing (including the need for staff goodwill); and a desire to educate the whole child with a focus on culturally appropriate pedagogy.

Research Question Three asked:
What perceived benefits and difficulties have accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring?

From the research a number of benefits and difficulties were identified by the participants as having accrued for Maori students as a result of their engagement in academic mentoring. These benefits and difficulties again fell under the themes of: academic decision making, whanau involvement, sustainability and educating the whole child.

Academic Decision Making

A benefit Maori student participants involved in this study identified is that academic mentors set high academic expectations for each student. This is validated by the literature which discusses how low teacher expectations can impact on Maori achievement (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Durie, 2011; Mahuika & Bishop, 2008; Sheriff, 2010), as I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The academic mentors who took part in this study see potential in their Maori students, they set high academic expectations for them and they work on individual programmes with them rather than homogenous approaches, so those goals can be achieved. Research participants commented repeatedly about the individualised approach academic mentoring allowed Maori students to experience at their respective schools. This approach of high expectations, seeing Maori potential, and valuing the diversity of Maori is supported by the literature (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011; Mahuika & Bishop, 2008; Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). Academic mentors know their Maori students. The ones in this study did not make generic comments about Maori doing best in subjects where they could use their hands. There was no mention of the idea that Maori were best suited to certain occupations. This suggests that the staff acting as academic mentors are no longer influenced by the historical educational policies which included the need for educators to help Maori recognise the "dignity of manual labour" (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999, p. 21).

Whanau Involvement

Another perceived benefit accrued for Maori students participating in academic mentoring in this research is whanau being involved in their schooling. Participants in the interviews and focus groups all conveyed that the whanau involvement had increased because of the academic mentoring programme and that the contact between the school and whanau allowed the sharing of positive attitudes, aspirations

and expectations for students. This is the sort of interface that Durie (2011) believes will allow Maori students to experience educational success.

The academic mentoring programme at both schools was moving towards better ways to include whanau in the discussions. The students were aware that the academic mentors made contact with their whanau. One student at River School lamented that he could not do anything 'naughty' as the academic mentor and his caregivers were so 'tight'. However, the students from both schools were much more aware of the contact with home being because of problems. They did not recognise the partnership being created between themselves, the school and whanau to positively enhance their educational experience. Whanau, staff and the educational leaders could identify this. This suggests that more needs to be done to allow the Maori students to experience what the literature suggests; that although whanau will be informed about problems, it is more important that they work with the schools to identify potential, and co-construct pathways that will allow the promise of each student to be realised (Durie, 2011; Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). To create a real inclusion of the students, secondary schools may need to include them whenever the academic mentors make any contact with their whanau. The students will probably have suggestions around the best way for this to occur and it might take different forms for different students. Both of the secondary schools in the study discussed wanting students to have more ownership of their learning but neither had considered ways to include students in the ongoing conversations they were having with their whanau when they were not the formal interviews.

Whanau at both schools appreciated being involved in interviews with the academic mentors and their children to set academic goals and plan how to achieve those goals. The schools experienced similar results as those reported by McKinley et al. (2009) who examined what happened when schools offered parent-teacher meetings so that whanau attend with their child and meet with the academic mentor for an in-depth overview of their child's achievement. These results showed a dramatic increase in the attendance of whanau. Whanau at both schools felt positive about the information they received about school from their children and they all reported discussing academic mentoring with their children. This reflects the research that states that academic mentoring can have positive effects on the quality of the parent-child

communication and can reduce parental stress about their child's schooling (Larose et al., 2012; Rhodes, 2002).

The interviews and focus groups highlighted the mutual respect whanau and staff at the schools had for each other. A Coast School whanau participant shared how she felt welcome at the school. Both schools avoid harking back to an education system which the literature suggests insisted that schools know best what students need, regardless of ethnicity (Barrington, 2008; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The two schools involved in this research realise that academic mentoring must focus on actively engaging students' whanau. This is providing the Maori students with what Castagno and Brayboy (2008) highlight in their research as, the benefit of complementary educational expectations between home and school.

Sustainability

A perceived difficulty experienced by Maori students involved in academic mentoring was the experience being dependent on who their academic mentor is. Thirteen participants from across the interviews, focus groups and sites commented that the academic mentoring experience was dependent on the academic mentor. There were comments by students from Coast School that they would like to do different activities in their academic mentoring groups - activities they saw other students experiencing. Students from River School explained how some academic mentors were very strict and did a lot of book work. Staff from both schools outlined that they also viewed differences but they explained that the difference lay in the academic mentors' ability to form a strong relationship with the students based on high expectations. This is supported by the research of Bishop and Berryman (2006) which suggests that the positioning of the teacher is important for Maori student success, especially in relation to the expectations that they set and the relationships they form. Penetito (2011) adds to this in his research by suggesting that the education system in New Zealand will be more stable when Maori feel a sense that their values and practices are welcome in schools; for this to occur teachers will need to rethink the types of relationships they form with Maori students. Moreover, Mahuika and Bishop (2008) identified that deficit theorising impacted badly on teachers' relationships with Maori students and meant "that teachers tended to have low expectations of Maori students. This in turn created a downward spiralling self-fulfilling prophecy of Maori student underachievement and

failure" (p. 3). To address the perceived difficulty of who the academic mentor is, secondary schools may need to address how they support academic mentors so they can form productive relationships with Maori students.

The two schools had both attempted to give the academic mentoring programme a structure. Resources were provided on a weekly basis to support academic mentors who wanted to use them. Both schools also worked hard on providing support to academic mentors who were identified as struggling. However, if the academic mentor did not improve the response was different at each school. River School seemed to accept that there would be some academic mentors who were not as strong as others and they tried to support the students in these academic mentoring groups with the Deans. At Coast School there was a more definitive decision made that there was a baseline of performance which needed to be met for a staff member to continue being an academic mentor. This meant that a small number of staff were removed from the role. While there were still differences in performances, a baseline was set. Those teachers who were not prepared to follow the structures set by the school were offered help but if they did not improve they were not used as academic advisors. This decision was very focused on what was best for the students, but it also had repercussions for staff who commented on their academic mentoring groups being bigger because of it. Notably, staff at both schools were loath to talk about their colleagues' performance as academic mentors. The leadership within these schools have worked hard to listen to their staff to ensure that the pressures are addressed and academic mentoring has been able to become embedded, nourished and sustained. This approach is supported by the literature (McKinley et al., 2009; Timperley et al., 2007). However, they may need to work with staff to clearly ascertain the performance criteria associated with academic mentoring in their schools. This could lead to more open discussions around expectations and the support required by staff to meet them. It could make baseline expectations much clearer.

The schools involved in this study have not received any extra funding to implement or run their academic mentoring programmes. This has placed a strain on the schools and staff. Added to this there has been very little support available for the schools to access to help up-skill staff who struggle with being an academic mentor. Schools who implement academic mentoring that include Maori students are likely to need help

to provide ongoing support to staff who struggle with this role. This is because, as Villegas and Lucas (2002) point out, there is no 'one off' course to create a culturally responsive teacher. This may be an issue which needs to be addressed more thoroughly in schools, with Ministry of Education support and funding. It is beyond this research to solve this issue but it is an area that warrants more research to support a sustainable approach to academic mentoring.

Educating the Whole Child

All of the participant groups in this study discussed academic mentoring within the schools as being about more than academic results. A benefit which was referred to repeatedly was students feeling a sense of belonging and being valued. This develops out of the relationships which are formed within the mentoring group, between the mentees and between the academic mentor and the mentees. Maori students believe that they are seen as individuals and the whanau participants expressed this belief as well. This fits with the research which suggests that students, especially Maori students, learn best when professionals recognise that individual variation can be valued and decisions about curriculum and how to interact with students need to be individualised and culturally and developmentally responsive (Kochhar-Bryant, 2010; Mahuika & Bishop, 2008).

The challenge for the academic mentors is seeing every student as an individual while challenging their own values, attitudes and ideologies so that Maori students' cultural needs are catered for. This is supported by the literature about culturally responsive pedagogy (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Seeing Maori students as individuals does not mean ignoring that they are Maori. Brayboy et al. (2007) found that teachers who claim to be colour blind and treat all students the same way are actually refusing to see the reality of what indigenous students face. This only alienates the students further and makes school less relevant to their lives. This is supported by Kailin (1999) who noted that teachers who want to be effective academic mentors need to interrogate their own beliefs and they must be offered support so they can recognise the complexity of issues facing indigenous students. Research into Maori students supports these views and shows that when viewing the student as an individual the positioning of the teacher is important (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011).

Maori students from both schools spoke of the benefits of feeling cared for, being safe and that their academic mentors had high expectations of them. However, they also spoke of the difficulty of feeling bored at times during their academic mentoring time. This difficulty was also recognised by some staff and whanau. This reflects the problem outlined by Castagno and Brayboy (2008) of the importance of having a structured programme and aligning it with the desire to tap into students' curiosity and engaging them in topics that they are interested in. It may also reflect a lack of discussion with students about the academic mentoring programme and consciously including them in the planning of the programme. Research by Cook-Sather (2002) identified that using students' experiences and views can improve educational practice as teachers listen and learn from students. This is supported by research in New Zealand and the assessment of the use of Maori student voice in secondary schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). School leaders may consider surveying the difficulties associated with academic mentoring on a more regular basis to ensure this becomes shared knowledge.

In summary when considering the perceived accrued benefits and difficulties for Maori students involved in academic mentoring the interview and focus group participants identified three benefits and two difficulties. The benefits are: high expectations being set for each student; students feeling a sense of belonging and being valued; and whanau being involved with their schooling. The difficulties are that the experience is dependent on who the academic mentor is, and at times the students find the academic mentoring time boring. What did stand out is the commitment to the programme by all of the participants and the genuine desire to see it continue. The difficulties were seen as areas to be worked on, not reasons for shutting down the programmes.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study explored academic mentoring for Maori students; more specifically, the ways that two state secondary schools have introduced and implemented academic mentoring for Maori students. It considered the perceived accrued benefits and difficulties experienced by Maori students involved in the academic mentoring programmes in relation to their schools.

This final chapter will provide an overview of the research study, draw valid overall conclusions, evaluate any limitations, and make recommendations for further research. Five key conclusions are presented which are related to the three research questions that have guided this study. This is followed by recommendations, the limitations of the research, suggestions for future research and a final concluding statement.

Key Conclusions

Key Conclusion One: **Ongoing conversations between academic mentors and Maori students based on strong relationships and high quality individualised data appears to have a positive impact on Maori students' educational experience in the two mainstream secondary schools studied.**

With Maori students still the least likely in New Zealand to transition directly into tertiary education and still well behind their Pakeha peers in attainment of Levels 1, 2 and 3 in NCEA, the major challenge facing the New Zealand education system today remains the continuing disparity between Pakeha and Maori achievement (Bishop, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2014b; Sheriff, 2010). To address this issue New Zealand has spent millions of dollars with limited success (Bishop, 2012).

The academic mentoring programmes in this research study have not focused on the achievement rates of Maori students. Instead they have focused on making sure that every student has high quality individualised data available about their learning. Added to this has been the focus of building strong relationships between the academic mentors and Maori students so that ongoing conversations can occur about learning and subject choice. These discussions are important as poor subject choice can limit students opportunities. Madjar et al. (2009) explains:

> Maori and Pacific students, most of whom attend low-decile schools, tend to be enrolled in less academic subjects and unit rather than achievement standards, and to complete fewer credits from the approved list of subjects (required for completion of the UE qualification). Such a pattern of course choices places students from these groups with the ability and potential to succeed in degree-level qualifications at risk of not achieving the UE qualification, or of achieving at a level that is likely to exclude them from limited-entry university programmes (p. 4).

This is not to suggest that Maori are seen as the same as all other students as this would perpetuate a deficit approach (Baber, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Instead Maori students are offered, through the academic mentoring programmes in these schools, a long term relationship with their academic mentor (the duration of their time at secondary school at both sites in the study), daily meetings, and regular meetings which include their whanau (at least three times a year in both schools). These up-to-date data about learning are shared regularly with the individual student and their whanau.

The schools in the research introduced academic mentoring programmes that were very different. The amount of time allocated each week for meetings varied and the activities used were context based. However there were commonalities across the schools including:

- Academic mentors and their group of mentees meet every day for at least twenty minutes;
- There is an allocated time of at least an hour once a week for extended meetings between the academic mentors and their group of mentees;
- Conversations occur between the academic mentors and mentees on a regular basis about learning using information from the student management system; and
- Academic and personal goals are set by every student in the mentors group once a term and these are referred to throughout the term.

These similarities match with the research which suggests that, to be successful, academic mentoring programmes must be sustained within a school, with the continual use of good data and built on relationships underpinned with trust and high expectations. This is supported by McKinley et al. (2009) who noted the need for high quality data to be used if meaningful conversations were to occur with students about their goals. Hughes and Karp (2004) support the need for high quality data but also outlined the need for the conversations between mentor and mentee to be regular and ongoing. Rhodes and DuBois (2008) reiterated this finding by stating that to forge real connections with a mentor, that are based on high expectations, trust and empathy, students need to spend time with their mentor on a consistent basis. Furthermore, Bishop and Berryman (2006) found that Maori students needed to "trust their teachers

if they were to be inspired to participate" (p. 143). Regular meetings, conversations, trusting relationships and the use of data are all important to the success of an academic mentoring programme. However, for it to be successful for Maori students they must be treated as individuals by academic mentors who are culturally responsive.

Key Conclusion Two: **For academic mentoring to be successful for Maori students they need to be treated as individuals by academic mentors who are culturally responsive and hold high expectations for them as individuals.**

The research in New Zealand and overseas is consistent in its assertion that low teacher expectations for indigenous students lead to poor academic results (Bishop, 2011; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Durie, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The academic mentoring programmes in both schools were focused on the academic mentors having high expectations for their Maori students. Coupled with this, however, was an acceptance that the academic mentors needed to be flexible when dealing with Maori students and this required them to engage in uncompromising questioning of their own ontology around teaching and learning (Brayboy et al., 2007). Flexibility in secondary schools means that instead of constantly demanding that the Maori students bend to the school's needs, the academic mentors are looking for ways the school can adapt to the needs of the students (Kochhar-Bryant, 2010). The schools in the study showed they did this through creating individual time tables for students and allowing multi level subject selection to occur.

The schools involved in this research did not see academic mentoring as a programme which stood alone. The interviews and focus groups highlighted a fundamental belief from the educational leaders and staff that their schools were working towards social change (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The reason for having academic mentoring was a genuine desire to engage Maori students in learning and to accept that multiple ways of viewing the world do exist and that by integrating those different ways of viewing the world into schools, educational outcomes can be improved for Maori students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). The educational leaders at the schools involved in this research have accepted that short term solutions are unlikely to address the years of

poor education policies which planted and nurtured the seeds of Maori underachievement in New Zealand (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1999). The staff involved in the focus groups have accepted that the ways in which academic mentors position themselves in regard to deficit theories about Maori student achievement makes a difference (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Durie, 2011; Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). Unfortunately, there was evidence of staff who struggled with being academic mentors in regard to building trust, having high expectations and/or being culturally responsive. This point leads onto the next key conclusion which focuses on the support and resourcing needed to train, develop and manage academic mentors.

Key Conclusion Three: **The lack of support for secondary schools that implement academic mentoring for Maori students makes it difficult for them to provide the professional development and support for teachers who struggle with being an academic mentor.**

The two sites involved in the research both had time set aside weekly for professional development, there was ongoing supervision of mentors by the Deans in each school and frequent meetings for academic mentors to gain support. These are all conditions which are recommended for the success of an academic mentoring programme (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; McKinley et al., 2009).   Despite this, both schools experienced staff who struggled to be academic mentors. At one school this was dealt with by trying to support those staff and develop their skills, but also by allowing them to continue in the role regardless of the outcome.   At the other school, if no improvement was made the staff members were removed from the role as academic mentor. In both cases staff who struggled to be academic mentors put stress on other staff in the school and Maori students and whanau participants were aware of how much impact the academic mentor had on students' experience of the programme.

In setting up their academic mentoring programmes both schools had considered how they would ensure that the academic mentoring groups run by staff were kept to a manageable size. They focused on the structure that they would have for regular meetings with students, and how they would make sure that professional development

could be offered. Moreover, they ensured that there was a clear structure of support for staff, with Deans assigned to different academic mentoring groups. In doing so they supported the majority of their staff well. However, both schools had examples of staff who were struggling. For one school this meant students experiencing academic mentoring programmes that were unsatisfactory, and for the other it meant that a small number of staff were removed from the process. While whanau and Maori students were unaware of this removal, teaching staff in the school were very aware of it.

Just as there is no recipe for addressing Maori student achievement, it is unlikely that there is one approach which will ensure all staff in a secondary school are capable of being effective academic mentors. However, research has suggested that the best teacher professional learning encourages emotional engagement with learning, time to reflect on practice and, the opportunity to be coached and mentored, as well as the provision of creative outlets and cross-cultural experiences (Robertson & Murrihy, 2005). A 'one off' experience is unlikely to offer any real gains.

While both schools valued professional learning they were both struggling with how to support ineffective academic mentors. This placed pressure on other staff. It also meant that Maori students perceived the academic mentoring programmes' effectiveness being dependent on the student's mentor. Neither school was aware of outside support that they could approach for help with these issues. This highlights the high levels of staff commitment and the increase in workload required to make academic mentoring successful for Maori students.

Key Conclusion Four: **Academic mentoring in secondary schools requires high levels of staff commitment and increases staff workloads.**

Educational leaders, staff, whanau and Maori student participants recognised that academic mentoring required high levels of staff commitment and increased workload for the staff involved. However, the staff involved in the research did not see this as a reason to discontinue with the academic mentoring. This is supported by the findings of McKinley et al. (2009) who found that teachers will accept an increase in workload if they believe it is impacting positively on student outcomes. However, staff at both

schools also felt that they were being consulted about the academic mentoring programmes and that their input was being responded to. The educational leaders in the two schools in the study understand that the academic programmes they are offering are contextually based. Therefore they have worked with staff in the context of their schools to develop the academic mentoring programme as they proceed, and they have listened to and placed value on the comments their staff have shared (Fullan, 2002). Staff conveyed that they felt involved in the development of the programme.

The time and commitment put into the programme by the staff is valued by the educational leaders, whanau and Maori students. Educational leaders', whanau and Maori student participants' comments are reflected in the work of Brayboy et al. (2007) who suggest that teachers who nurture and show belief and interest in their students improve their students' academic achievement. Doing this increases the work load of those who become academic mentors as they need to take part in the lives of their students to build the relationships with them and their whanau which will allow meaningful conversations to occur. Brayboy et al. (2007) noted that indigenous students would experience more success when teachers engage in the lives of their students. Villegas and Lucas (2002) develop this idea further and outline that teachers need to know about students' experiences outside of school and they need to get to know their students' families. Durie (2011) sums it up by stating: "Success for Maori students will be more likely where whanau and school can share positive attitudes, aspirations, and expectations" (p. 14). For this to happen, real communication needs to occur between schools and whanau, communication which allows whanau to be heard rather than just requiring them to listen.

Secondary schools that implement academic mentoring for Maori students will demand more from the staff who act as academic mentors. This study has found that the role will be demanding, increase workload and take time. It has also found that the role is seen as rewarding and worthwhile and the staff involved in the study engaged with it willingly because they felt included in the ongoing development of the academic mentoring programmes. Similarly whanau and Maori students will contribute to the successful development of the academic mentoring programmes if they are regularly consulted.

Key Conclusion Five: **Ongoing whanau and Maori student consultation is essential for academic mentoring to be successful for Maori students.**

Whanau and Maori student participants in this study value education. This is corroborated by Durie (2011) who found that Maori learners and their whanau were aware of the importance of education to students' futures. Whanau participants from River School felt they were consulted through surveys and hui about the academic mentoring programme. Whanau from Coast School supported the educational leader's assertion that in the beginning whanau were not included in the development of the programme but this was improving. All whanau felt they were included in their student's educational plan and that the meetings with the academic mentor were worthwhile.

Moreover, the whanau felt that they were being supported by the academic mentor when it came to advising the students about subject selection and career pathways. This is important, as whanau are very likely to influence students' educational choices (Durie, 2011; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2002; Hipkins et al., 2004). This suggests that the schools involved in this research have focused on advising and supporting students and whanau through the academic mentoring programmes. Through this support the schools have been able to involve whanau in the academic mentoring process, something the literature repeatedly recommends (Biddulph. F. et al., 2003; ERO., 2008; McKinley et al., 2009). Working with whanau has made it easier for the schools to meet individual student's needs. While both schools have included whanau in the ongoing development of the academic mentoring programme, they also recognise that it is an area on which they need to continue to focus.

Another area that the schools may need to focus on is ongoing consultation with Maori students about the academic mentoring programme. Maori students at both of the schools saw whanau involvement as being mostly about whanau being told about things students had done wrong. Although whanau and staff discussed there being more positive interaction the Maori students seemed unaware of it. In addition, the students commented that at times they felt bored in the academic mentoring time, but they had not had the avenues provided to feed that information back to their academic mentors. Providing these avenues is important as, when students feel that their

opinions are taken seriously and acted on, they feel empowered and are motivated to engage in their education (Cook-Sather, 2002). They could have suggestions to improve the activities they find boring in the academic mentoring time or they could gain a greater appreciation of why the activities are necessary. Mitra (2004) suggests that student achievement will improve and new school initiatives will be more successful if student voice is used to help shape them. Engaging Maori students more openly in conversations about the information being shared with their whanau and giving them input into the development of the academic mentoring programmes would allow more power sharing to occur. This is an element that supports Maori student achievement (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

In summary, while both schools have increased whanau participation through the academic mentoring programme consulting more with them and Maori students could enhance the programme and the Maori students' experience of the programme further.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have led to the development of six recommendations. It is worth noting that these recommendations may be relevant to any mainstream secondary school thinking of implementing an academic mentoring programme which will include Maori students. Even though this was a small-scale study, readers may choose to use these conclusions to inform practice in their own context:

1. That, before implementing an academic mentoring programme schools must have good student data management systems which allow staff clear and easy access to individual students' academic information;
2. That adequate time must be allocated to the academic mentors and their mentees to allow the development of relationships;
3. That secondary schools that implement academic mentoring for Maori students must work with staff to make sure they are using culturally-responsive pedagogy and that they recognise their own cultural positioning and how it impacts on their Maori students;
4. That secondary schools that implement academic mentoring programmes for Maori students need resourcing support to train, develop and manage

academic mentors and to keep the ratios at workable numbers. They also need resourcing to ensure that systems and structures are in place to support staff with the extra work-load;

5. That staff who are going to be academic mentors need to be included in the setting up and development of the programme; and

6. That whanau and Maori students must be included in the setting up and development of the academic mentoring programme. This means their input is sought and used not only for the development of goals and educational plans for students but also for the programme overall.

Limitations of the Study

The small number of research participants is the first limitation. It is possible that because of this the findings and conclusions may not be an accurate representation of the experiences and perceptions of educational leaders, staff, whanau and Maori students in all New Zealand mainstream secondary schools. However, as Tisdall, Davis, and Gallagher (2009) point out small-scale research can be useful as a tool to help broaden knowledge, increase competency in the teaching profession and encourage successful innovation. The readers of this study will have to evaluate for themselves the extent to which the findings and conclusions are relevant to their own contexts (Cohen et al., 2007).

The second limitation of this study is the lack of prior research studies on this topic. Academic mentoring is in its infancy in secondary schools in New Zealand and this means there is limited research on its impact on Maori students. It is hoped that this study will encourage others to research this topic.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research has highlighted possibilities for future research. These possibilities include:

- A more in-depth and wide-ranging study exploring Maori students' experiences of academic mentoring across a larger sample of New Zealand mainstream secondary schools;

- Research into effective methods for providing professional development to introduce and enhance staffs' culturally-responsive pedagogy for the purposes of academic mentoring for Maori students;
- Research into the most effective ways to consult with whanau and Maori students in regards to academic mentoring; and
- Research into the most effective ways to support staff who become academic mentors.

Final Word

This study has investigated academic mentoring which includes Maori students in two mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand. The findings and recommendations add to the body of literature relating to academic mentoring for Maori students and will be available to school leaders and schools who may be interested in introducing academic mentoring to Maori students in their school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Educational Leaders' Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADER IN CHARGE OF ACADEMIC MENTORING

1   What is your position in the school, and how long have you held this position?

2   What are your areas of responsibility in relation to academic mentoring?

3   Why was the academic mentoring programme put in place?

4   In what ways do you believe academic mentoring has impacted on Maori students' subject choice?

5   When implementing the programme what type of consultation was there with; whanau? staff? Maori students?

6   What support has been given to those who act as mentors?

7   What do you believe have been the main challenges for staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students?

8   What do you believe have been the main successes experienced by staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students?

9   Has academic mentoring impacted on the way that the school interacts with whanau?

10   What do you believe are the main benefits experienced by Maori students engaged in academic mentoring?

11   What do you believe have been the difficulties experienced by Maori students engaged in academic mentoring?

12   Why does the school continue to invest in the programme?

13   What would your advice be to any school considering setting up an academic mentoring programme?

Appendix B – Staff Focus Group Schedule

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR STAFF

Karakia
Ko Te Aroha te Maunga
Ko Piako te awa
Ko Dominion Monarch te Waka
Ko Ngati Pakeha toku iwi
No Morrinsville ahau
Ko Yvonne raua ko Richard oku Matua
Ko Sheena toku ingoa

Welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join me to talk about academic mentoring. I am currently studying at Unitec and I will return to my role as X in December.

I am currently researching how people perceive academic mentoring for Maori students.

You were invited to participate in this group because you have been an academic mentor to Maori students. I am interested in your perceptions of the academic mentoring programme and the benefits and difficulties it presents Maori students.

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that I'm interested in all of your comments.

You may have noticed the Dictaphone. I'm recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very useful things in these discussions and I can't write fast enough to get them all down. While we will use names in this discussion I will not use your names in my findings. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

Well let's begin. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the group .

OPENING QUESTION

   1   Please tell me your name and what you do at the school.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

   2   What has been your role in regards to academic mentoring? How long
           have you been involved?

   3   Why do you believe the academic mentoring programme was put in place?

   4   What professional learning, or professional development have you
           received in regards to academic mentoring?

KEY QUESTIONS

   5   Thinking back over your involvement with Maori students in the academic
           mentoring programme what, in your opinion, have been the greatest
           successes for staff?

   6   What, in your opinion, have been the greatest challenges for staff?

   7   To what extent do you think academic mentoring has impacted on Maori
           student subject choice?

   8   In your opinion, what advantages have there been in regards to the school
           having contact with whanau for Maori students involved in academic
           mentoring?

   9   What disadvantages do you believe have there been in regards to whanau
           contact with the school for those involved in academic mentoring?

   10   What have been the major benefits for Maori students associated with
           academic mentoring?

   11   What have been the major difficulties for Maori students associated with
           academic mentoring?

12   If you were in charge of the academic mentoring programme what is would
       you change to make the programme better?

13   What advice would you give to a school who are thinking of starting and
       academic mentoring programme?

14   If you had to summarise the academic mentoring programme in one
       sentence what would you say?

ENDING QUESTION

15   Is there anything else you would like to say about Maori student
       involvement in the academic mentoring programme?

Appendix C – Whanau Focus Group Schedule

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR WHANAU

Karakia
 Ko Te Aroha te Maunga
Ko Piako te awa
Ko Dominion Monarch te Waka
Ko Ngati Pakeha toku iwi
No Morrinsville ahau
Ko Yvonne raua ko Richard oku Matua
Ko Sheena toku ingoa

Welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join me to talk about
academic mentoring. I am currently studying at Unitec and I will return to my role as
Deputy Principal at X School in December.

I am currently researching how people perceive academic mentoring for Maori
students.

You have been invited to participate in this group because your child has been
involved in the academic mentoring programme. I am interested in your perceptions
of the academic mentoring programme and the benefits and difficulties it presents
Maori students.

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that I'm interested in all of your comments.

You may have noticed the Dictaphone. I'm recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very useful things in these discussions and I can't write fast enough to get them all down. While we will use names in this discussion I will not use your names in my findings. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

Well let's begin and find out more about each other.

OPENING QUESTION

1   Please tell us about yourself and how long your child has been involved in the academic mentoring programme.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

2   Tell me what you think of the academic mentoring programme? What do you think your child gets from being involved?

3   What do you think is the purpose of the academic mentoring programme?

4   In what ways has your input been sought in relation to the programme?

KEY QUESTIONS

5   Thinking back over your child's involvement in the academic mentoring programme what has been, in your opinion, most beneficial?

6   What, in your opinion, has been the greatest difficulty?

7   In your opinion what impact has academic mentoring had on your child's selection of subjects?

8   What impact, in your opinion, has your child's involvement in the programme had on the communication you have had with the school?

9   How well informed do you feel about your child's progress at school?

10   What do you think are the main challenges for staff associated with academic mentoring for Maori students?

11   What successes do you think are experienced by staff associated with academic mentoring.

12   Do you believe the programme has influenced your child's goals for when they leave school?

13   What would you like to change about the academic mentoring programme?

14   If you had to summarise the programme in one sentence what would you say?

15   What advice would you give to a school who was considering implementing and academic mentoring programme?

ENDING QUESTION

16   Is there anything else you would like to say about Maori student involvement in the academic mentoring programme?

Appendix D – Maori Students Focus Group Schedule

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

Karakia
 Ko Te Aroha te Maunga
Ko Piako te awa
Ko Dominion Monarch te Waka
Ko Ngati Pakeha toku iwi
No Morrinsville ahau
Ko Yvonne raua ko Richard oku Matua
Ko Sheena toku ingoa

Welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join me to talk about academic mentoring. I am currently studying at Unitec and I will return to my role as Deputy Principal at X School in December.

I am currently researching how people perceive academic mentoring for Maori students.

You have been invited to be part of this group because you are taking part in academic mentoring. I am interested in your thoughts about the academic mentoring programme and the benefits and difficulties it has presented you.

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that I'm interested in all of your comments.

You may have noticed the Dictaphone. I'm recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very useful things in these discussions and I can't write fast enough to get them all down. While we will use names in this discussion I will not use your names in my findings. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

Well let's begin and find out more about each other.

OPENING QUESTION

1   Please tell me about yourself and how long you've been involved in the academic mentoring programme.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

2   What do you think of the academic mentoring programme? What do you feel you get out of being involved?

3   What reasons do you think the school has for having the academic mentoring programme?

4   In what ways do your ideas get considered or used in the programme?

KEY QUESTIONS

5   Thinking back over your involvement in the academic mentoring programme what has been the most beneficial things about it?

6   What has been the greatest difficulty about being involved in the programme?

7   What impact has the academic mentoring had on your selection of subjects?

8   In your opinion what impact has being involved in the programme had on your whanau's communication with the school about your learning?

9   What do you think are the main challenges for staff involved in academic mentoring?

10   What do you think are the successes experienced by staff involved in academic mentoring?

11   How do you feel the academic mentoring programme has influenced your progress at school?

12   In what ways has the academic mentoring programme influenced your goals for when you leave school?

13   What would you like to see changed about the academic mentoring programme?

14   If you had to sum up the programme in one sentence what would you say?

15   What advice would you give a school who was thinking about starting an academic mentoring programme?

ENDING QUESTION

16   Is there anything else you would like to say about your involvement in the academic mentoring programme?