ACADEMY PROGRAMME INITIATIVES:
A NEW BEGINNING?

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Natasha Galt

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PROLOGUE

A NEW BEGINNING? : SARAH'S STORY

During the summer of 1997 I met 18-year-old Sarah. We were employed part-time as sales people in a local 'trendy surfie shop'. Unlike the remainder of the staff who continued to pursue tertiary qualifications at Polytechnic or University, Sarah had left school at the age of sixteen with no formal school qualifications and no particular aspirations. She was employed simply because the owner had taken a chance. He had seen something in her that many other people had overlooked. While he knew that she did not have the same education or experience as the remainder of the staff he believed that, given the right opportunities, her potential would be realised. Either way, it did not matter to Sarah that she did not have any qualifications and could not get fulltime work. Her parents had no qualifications and according to her 'they had done just fine'. She was happy working in the store for a few hours a week as she could spend the rest of the time indulging in her true passion, basketball.

After leaving school Sarah developed two ambitions. One was to play basketball, the other to join the navy. As things stood she could play basketball as much as she wanted but she had absolutely no chance of being accepted into the navy given that they demanded a certain minimum entry level of qualifications. Sarah had, nonetheless, applied anyway and could not understand why her application was rejected as quickly as it was. Although she felt that she could do the work she had no way of demonstrating
her potential, nor was she prepared to go back to school as an adult student to gain qualifications.

Prompted by her workmates, Sarah approached one of the sports coaches at her ‘old’ school and questioned him about how she might gain the qualifications the navy required. He had been involved in the establishment of an alternative schooling programme for students in situations similar to Sarah’s. Sarah’s old sports coach was the recently selected director of the inaugural sports academy at Grenache College. The coach suggested to Sarah that she needed to go back to school.

The sporting basis of the academy programme appealed to Sarah. As she put it, "I get qualifications for playing basketball". Although the connection was not apparent to many people, Sarah included, the academy programme used sports like basketball and as the motivational vehicle for achievement both on the sports field and academically.

Sarah duly enrolled and work increasingly took second place to her education as her six foot two inch frame led her to success in both school and national basketball competitions. Although basketball was her passion, anything to with sports sparked her enthusiasm and she soon developed a keen determination to succeed in both the sporting arena and the academic subjects offered as part of the academy programme.

The change in her attitude, as much as her skill base was marked. She successfully completed four School Certificate courses during that year and later sat the entrance exam for the navy and passed. Though she chose not to join the navy, the academy programme had been instrumental in increasing her chances of acceptance. It had provided her with the opportunity to play
sport, the motivational vehicle through which to develop her talents and her academic ability.

The experience of working with Sarah during that year made the decision to study academy programmes an easy one. After casual conversations with her about the programmes, several questions arose in my mind. Did all students experience the academy the same way that she did? Were they all as successful? What were the academy programmes doing to reach out to people like Sarah? Was sport the only motivational tool these students needed or were there others? How could these programmes assist students in the labour market?

By the time I began my research two years later I came to realise that the sports academy at Grenache College was not the only academy programme running in Garden City. Seven schools in the Garden City region had since implemented academy programmes. After initial discussion with organisers of the Grenache sports academy, I sought to investigate several other schools in the region and how they had implemented the academy programme. One school in particular drew my attention. Unlike the other six schools with academy programmes, Malbec High School had not followed Grenache by setting up a sports academy, but had instead set up academy programmes that were vocationally based. I was interested to see how these courses differed from the original sports academy model and how they had actually gone about developing a work focussed curriculum. I selected Malbec to be used as a study in developing this thesis.

1 Pseudonyms have been used in place of the name of the city, the schools and the students to protect the identity of participants in this study.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is situated within the contemporary debates surrounding the relationship of education to the labour market. The re-emergence of vocational training in the form of academy programmes aligns the reformation of vocational training in New Zealand schools with new vocational training developments in the United Kingdom and Canada. My study of academy programmes in Malbec High School challenges several aspects of the new vocationalism.

Two stories, representing two distinct points of view, emerged from my study of academy programmes. The first story was told by teachers and directors at Malbec High School and closely aligns the organisation of academy programmes with the new vocationalism. A concomitant of that organisational structure is the argument that such programmes reproduce the social divisions required by the labour market and in doing so direct and restrict working class youth to the lower end of the labour market. The second story, told by the academy students, refutes this claim and argues conversely that the academy experience positively repositions students attitudes to schooling in such a way that some students are empowered to think beyond occupational expectations of class and the resultant labour market restrictions. The argument presented within this thesis views established interpretations of the new vocationalism as insufficient with regard to academy programmes within the New Zealand context and argues that a reconsideration and reformulation of these interpretations is required.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The focus and themes of this study derive from contemporary debates surrounding the re-emergence of vocational training in the form of academy programmes in several Garden City secondary schools. Until recently the focus of this debate has centred on a growing awareness that traditional academic secondary schooling did not cater to certain types of students. There has also been concern surrounding the increasing deficit in the labour market between the skills required by industry and what schools can provide. As a consequence there has been a shift in the social organisation of vocational education as the relationship of education to the labour market has increasingly come under scrutiny (Cohen, 1984; Bates, 1984; Dale et al, 1990; Shilling, 1990; Gleeson, 1990; Apple, 1998; Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994; Moore, 1984).

Critics argue that the limitations of the progressive, liberal model of education so prevalent in New Zealand's educational and vocational history are twofold. Firstly, this model has failed to meet the needs of many students, and secondly it has also failed to meet the changing needs of the new economy (Hickox and Moore, 1990; Irwin, 1997). Consequently there has been a dramatic increase in youth unemployment reflecting both a change in the organisation of industry and the increasing numbers of students entering the labour market not equipped with the skills required by industry. The new economy requires a workforce that can readily adapt to new technologies and production processes (Cohen, 1984; Marshall, 1997; Shilling, 1990). It is
argued that these workers require a set of attitudes and values about the
'world of work' that aligns their personal goals and aspirations to industry
needs.

As a consequence the education sector has been reorganised to more
appropriately skill workers and meet the needs of industry. More than ever
before education is now seen instrumentally as a means to entry into certain
sectors of the labour market (Marshall, 1997). Consequently vocational
training has re-emerged in the form of academy programmes - industry driven
models of skills training. Academy programmes aim to provide vocational
skills and training for students who have little or no qualifications by providing
a more relevant and practical curriculum couched in an occupational context.
By organising learning around content on subject interests and career
desires, academy programmes provide a way for non-academic, working
class students to gain the transferable and generic skills required by the new
economy and the contemporary labour market.

By positioning the development of academy programmes within the
contemporary debate over the role of vocational education, it is possible to
argue that academy programmes can be understood as a new form of
vocational training that has more appropriately reacted to the needs of both
students and industry. The 'new vocationalism' provides one lens through
which to interpret academy programmes and contemporary vocational reform
(Cohen, 1984; Bates, 1984; Dale et. al, 1990; Shilling; Gleeson, 1990; Apple,
1998; Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994; Moore, 1984). This approach
claims that vocational education and training has adopted three fundamental
characteristics that provide a new direction for the organisation of teaching
and learning in schools. Firstly, the introduction of a new discourse of skill
has reorganised the teaching of vocational skills away from occupationally based apprenticeships to single atomised units of skill. Secondly, industry involvement in curriculum design, implementation, and assessment will make vocational training more closely linked to the needs of the labour market. Thirdly, the new worker will develop a set of attitudes and values that identify with the values of business and industry (Marshall, 1997). This reformed vocational training reinstates the legitimacy and capacity of the education system to distribute differentiated forms of knowledge to students and to direct them to different destinations within the labour market, particularly working class youth to the bottom end of the labour market (Cohen, 1984; Moore 1984; Finn, 1984; McEwan, 1991).

Results of this study suggest that contemporary interpretations of the new vocationalism and its impact upon education do not readily address several aspects of the academy programmes within Malbec High School. Consequently I will argue that in order to fully understand academy programmes an alternative interpretation of the new vocationalism is necessary. This alternative approach positions academy programmes within the new vocational literature and agrees with contemporary arguments that academy courses reproduce the social divisions necessary for the labour market and direct working class students to the bottom end of the labour market. I will argue, however, that young workers produced by academy programmes, although being constrained by a class understanding of choice and social divisions, have greater employment opportunities and mobility within the constraints of the capitalist labour market and are empowered, in some instances, to move beyond these constraints and away from the lower end of the labour market.
The Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate how the re-emergence of vocational training in New Zealand through the academy programmes has shaped the experiences of the students involved. A series of questions about the design of academy programmes and the impact of the programmes on the students involved initiated my research. Three key questions emerged that became the basis for this study:

- How are vocational academy programmes organised?
- What assumptions underlie this method of organisation and what are the implications for the students and teachers associated with it?
- How have students' experiences of schooling been shaped by academy programmes?

My research concentrates on the experiences of the fifty-three students involved in the inaugural year of the 'vocational training' academies at Malbec High School. This school established vocational courses as part of the senior school curriculum as a way of providing low achieving students with more opportunities to gain skills required for the labour market. Although Malbec High School was not the first school to use the 'academy concept' in this way, the school was selected for the study due to the purely vocational focus of the curriculum. Through the period of research, qualitative techniques were used that consisted of interviews with teachers/directors and administrators, conducting focus groups with students and collecting student responses to a questionnaire.
Overview of Chapters

In the second chapter I provide a review of the literature surrounding various interpretations of the new vocationalism training paradigm and its impact on contemporary debate over vocational schooling. This chapter addresses the changing relationship of schooling and the labour market as a way to meet the needs of the new economy and control youth unemployment levels. I will critique the large body of research that constitutes the new vocationalism. This will be accomplished by identifying the three fundamental principles inherent in the new vocational approach to vocational training: the proliferation of industry involvement in curriculum reform; movement away from craft based notions of skill transmission to a new discourse of skill, and movement away from holistic teaching and assessment to individual units assessed by competent performance.

In Chapter Three, the academy concept will be introduced as a vocational alternative that focuses curriculum content on students' intended career destinations in order to make learning more relevant and realistic. Academy programmes were established in 1996 as a response to large numbers of students leaving the school system with little or no employable skills or qualifications. This chapter will outline the design of academy programmes that aim to inspire more purposeful learning by using interest and vocational relevance as a motivational tool. This investigation will begin by examining the historical precursor of the academy programmes established in Rangiora from 1917-1950. A context will then be provided for the re-emergence of the academy concept by explaining its progression from a sports based model to a vocational based model.
Chapter Four outlines the methodological procedures used to undertake this qualitative research. The interview procedures and data analysis used in this research will be discussed so as to provide insight into the themes that emerged as the study developed. These themes are revisited in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five is divided into two stories that allow academy programmes to be examined from two viewpoints. One story is developed from the teachers/directors and administrators and illuminates the organisational structures of academy programmes in such a way that allows for the interpretation of the programmes through a new vocational lens. The second story is less structured and is drawn from the many students who became involved in academy programmes for a 'new beginning'. Their story is shaped by their experiences of participating in an academy programme.

The sixth chapter weaves together the strands from the preceding chapters in order to discuss the relationship of academy programmes to a new vocational understanding of vocational training in schools. This chapter begins by laying open the two conventional interpretations of the new vocationalism. These approaches are examined to determine the degree to which they can provide an adequate interpretation of academy programmes. It is here that the division of these stories is essential as the two emergent stories show that while the new vocationalism can be used to interpret the teacher/directors and administrators story it cannot by used to assist in understanding the students' story. The result of my findings culminate in the argument that a reconsideration of these interpretations is necessary in order to fully understand the re-emergence and nature of vocational training through
academy programmes. It also considers possible starting points for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The last decade has seen the re-emergence of vocationally oriented programmes in New Zealand secondary schools. The most overt of these are the academy programmes now offered by an increasing number of Christchurch secondary schools. Like other forms of vocational training, academy programmes can be understood through several different approaches or 'lenses', however, these programmes differ significantly from previous forms of vocational training in New Zealand. The 'new vocationalism' (Cohen, 1984) has been used as a way of understanding the changes that have occurred in vocational education in Britain, and can also be used as a lens through which to interpret current vocational reform in New Zealand.

Following the post-war period, government policy on vocational training has expanded from the post-compulsory sector to the secondary school sector. The proliferation of industry contacts with schools has resulted in the direct inclusion of industry's needs into curricula through vocational programmes. Industry's incursion in curriculum development and assessment has had major implications for the social organisation of vocational education (Cohen, 1984; Bates, 1984; Dale et al, 1990; Shilling, 1990; Gleeson, 1990; Apple, 1998; Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994; Moore, 1984).

Industry attempts to affect vocational training through a number of mechanisms in order to mould the attitudes and beliefs of students to emulate those of industry. By tightly harnessing the subjectivities of students to the values of industry, vocational programmes seek to produce the model
of an 'ideal worker' as determined by industry (Cohen, 1984; Marshall, 1997; Shilling, 1990). The transmission of 'life skills' rather than specific craft-based forms of skill is one method used to train workers in response to industry needs. Consequently, the emergence of a new discourse of skill has reorganised the teaching of vocational skills through vocational programmes in schools (Hayes in Gleeson, 1990; Jackson, 1997; Lewis, 1998; Jackson and Jordan, 1999; Gaskell, 1986; Grubb cited in Lewis, 1998).

Historically vocational programmes have been based upon transmitting skill through occupationally specific, craft based, approaches to trade training. Apprenticeship schemes, previously the domain of post-compulsory training, were shaped and organised by labour needs with apprentice training being led by a master craftsperson. The new discourse of skill, although retaining an occupational emphasis, is organised in a remote manner that detaches practical skill from knowledge. Using competency based education, the emphasis of contemporary vocational programmes is on the mastery of single units of skill (unit standards) which act as a common currency between different workplace environments (Harris et al, 1995; Tuck and Peddie, 1995; Broadfoot, 1996; Natale and Joliffe; 1996). In an attempt to meet the needs of industry, vocational programmes in New Zealand have implemented unit standards designed by industry for industry. Although some academic courses do use unit standards as a means of assessment, unit standards are principally associated with, and now represent the currency of, vocational courses like academy programmes.

This chapter is divided into two sections that will investigate how the organisation of vocational training has been reformed to meet the needs of the 'new' economy (Hickox and Moore, 1990). Firstly the relationship between
the education system and the labour market will be addressed. Literature concerned with the new vocationalism suggests that the last two decades have seen the emergence of a serious disjuncture between the school curriculum and the perceived needs of employers and industry. Secondly, the resultant increase in involvement of industry in vocational training will be examined. Industry involvement has become more overt and extensive as a consequence of direct involvement in education policymaking (Gleeson, 1987, Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994).

**Schooling and the Labour Market**

The effect of neo-liberal reform in the last two decades has been to reorganise the relationship of education to society and the workplace. In particular, the capacity of the education system to successfully distribute students into different parts of the labour market has been called into question for one significant reason; it is claimed that the liberal, progressive model of education has not met the needs of either students or industry (Irwin, 1997). Further, it is argued that adherence to this model has created a skills deficit in the labour market between what is required by industry and what is provided by schools. In this vein, Hickox and Moore (1990) argue that the liberal democratic model of education fails to meet the changing needs of the 'new' economy. They argue that the economy of the twenty-first century requires a workforce that can readily adapt to new technologies and production processes. Consequently employers are reluctant to employ school leavers with 'inappropriate' skills which contributes to higher levels of youth unemployment. Deer and Sneddon (1992) have observed that leaving
school can now be described as a 'limbo-land' of unemployment and futureless casual/part-time jobs unless students have the appropriate training to meet industry needs.

The impact of new technology has placed pressure on the school system to redesign curricula to more appropriately meet the needs of industry. Pressure for reform has come not only from industry, but also from the government and parents who seek greater employment opportunities for youth. Understandably employers do not want unskilled or inappropriate skilled workers, and as a consequence it is increasingly difficult for students to leave school and gain entry-level jobs immediately. The impact of rising national unemployment levels, the abolition of the apprenticeship schemes, credential inflation, changes in access to government support, and the increase of the school leaving age to 16 has caused many of these students to return to school in order to gain more marketable skills and qualifications (Krahn and Lowe, 1991; Hickox and Moore, 1990; Gleeson, 1987).

With large numbers of students returning to school in the search for marketable skills the onus is on schools, and the education system in general, to refocus post-primary education to better meet the needs of both students and potential employers. As Finn (1984) and Walford et al (1988) argue, unemployment is a major fear of youth considering entering the labour market, and potential entrants will likely opt for further schooling in order to increase job prospects. The effect of these factors has been to shift students' perceptions of education toward an understanding whereby education is viewed 'extrinsically and instrumentally', for what it can lead to in the world of work and employment (Marshall, 1997).
The suggested inclusion of vocational training is part of a greater reform process encompassing political and economic strategies regarding the reorganisation of the workplace (Bates, 1984; Holt et al, 1987; Gleeson, 1990). Shuker (1987) claims that groups such as the New Zealand Planning Council, the Business Roundtable, and the Employers Federation are directing education towards a closer ‘fit’ with the economy and that industry involvement is essential. It is asserted that schools need to place a greater emphasis on preparing students for the realities of the workplace.

Moves to identify and reinstate the link between industry and education have centred on the introduction of courses that are based on vocational training as a response to youth unemployment and disaffection with academic curricula (Hargreaves et al, 1988; Cohen, 1984). Proponents of the reintroduction of vocational training in schools claim that by implementing a practical curriculum to promote occupationally specific learning, students will develop values, attitudes, and knowledge consistent with the ‘world of work’ alongside the acquisition of practically based skills and competencies that will tightly harness their personal goals to industry needs (Marshall, 1997; Barker, 1987; Walford, Purvis and Pollard, 1988; Dale et al, 1990). The introduction of such programmes asserts the legitimacy of the education system as a means to distribute differentiated forms of knowledge to students and direct them to different destinations within the labour market (Cohen, 1984; Moore 1984; Finn, 1984; McEwan, 1991).
The New Vocationalism

The emergence of a new theoretical understanding of education and training began in Britain in the late 1970's when large numbers of working class youth were leaving school without the appropriate skills and attitudes to gain employment. These students were between 16 and 18 years of age and primarily in the lower two-thirds of the academic ability range (Dale in Walford, Purvis and Pollard, 1988; Gleeson, 1990). As part of the 'Great Debate' on education, government and employers asserted that the education system failed to identify and address the inadequacies of the school system to prepare these students for transition to the workplace (Irwin, 1997; Dale et. al 1990). At this time, 'transition programmes' were set up as post-compulsory vocational courses, not as courses within schools. Over time, with greater numbers of students remaining in the school system, these vocational programmes have permeated into the secondary school curriculum. Consequently the new vocationalism attempts to explain how the emergence of vocational education and training within schools has adopted a new approach to skilling that responds to the contemporary requirements of the labour market (Cohen, 1984; Bates, 1984; Dale et al, 1990; Shilling, 1990; Gleeson, 1990; Apple, 1998; Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994; Moore, 1984).

Educational reform that adheres to a new vocational approach to training has three fundamental and defining principles. Firstly, these reforms are typified by a high degree of industry involvement in the design of vocational curricula (Gleeson, 1987, Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994). Secondly, such vocational courses use the transmission of 'life skills' to mould students
attitudes and values to the model of the 'ideal worker' as exemplified through competency based education (CBE) (Marshall, 1997, Cohen 1984). Thirdly, the new discourse of skill (Jackson and Jordan, 1999; Gaskell, 1986; Grubb cited in Lewis, 1998) reorganises the teaching of vocational skills away from a craft based, occupationally specific approach to prescribed units of competency based skill called unit standards (Harris et al, 1995; Tuck and Peddie, 1995; Broadfoot, 1996; Natale and Joliffe; 1996).

The effect of these developments has been two-fold. The school curriculum has increasingly become vocationalised. Secondly, and more importantly, these reforms have shifted control over skills training away from labour to employers mediated by the state.

Involvement of Industry in Education Policy Making

Vocational programmes that espouse notions of responsiveness, efficiency, accountability, and relevance to industry can accomplish these goals by the close involvement of industry in curriculum reform. The real impetus for this change to vocational education has come from both employers and neo-liberal governments in a manner that has, essentially, legitimated the involvement of industry in curriculum reform. Involvement of industry in curriculum reform includes the contribution of major employment organisations such as the Training and Enterprise Councils (UK), Private Industry Councils (USA), and the Business Roundtable and the Employers Federation in New Zealand. The involvement of these groups in education
reform constitutes a shift in policy making that has directed control away from educationalists to industry. As Moore argues:

This reflects the shift in power of a fundamental kind - from a decentralised education system, whose agents had an indirect relationship to production, and consequently enjoyed a high degree of 'relative autonomy', to a centralised system, whose agents bear a direct relationship to production and who define their objectives specifically in terms of the needs of production.

(Moore 1984, 66)

The role of industry in policy making, as Marshall (1997) argues, subsumes the position of educational policy makers because the direction of vocational curriculum reform is linked with industrial reform. Retaining educational policy makers for academic curricula whilst using industry experts for vocational curricula development creates a division in the focus and emphasis of education in schools. This division has been interpreted by various researchers (Cohen, 1984; 1997; Finn, 1984; Gaskell 1991; Shilling 1989) as an attempt to 'restore traditional divisions between non-academic (working class) and academic (middle class) streams within education' (Hickox and Moore, 1990. pp148). Research by Mac an Ghaill (cited in McEwan, 1991), using Redmond College as a case study found that although there was a more vocational stance to education that was relevant to the needs of the economy, the division between academic and vocational subject choices created a clearer distinction amongst students on the basis of their class. His findings also indicated that segregating academic and vocational content served to reproduce, maintain and legitimate a stratified hierarchy of 'academic' and 'non-academic' students. Mac an Ghaill argues that this
hierarchy became “synonymous with the division between working class and middle class students” (Cited in McEwan, 1991, 15).

Part of this division came from the understanding that whilst general academic courses of education focus on creating well rounded, free thinking, critical students, vocational education is intended to produce industry’s notion of the ‘ideal worker’ (Cohen, 1984; 1997; Moore, 1987; Marshall, 1997; Gaskell, 1991).

The ideal worker

The increased presence of industry in curriculum development has led to transformation in what is considered an appropriate education. Through the involvement of industry in the development of ‘new’ vocational programmes, courses increasingly focus on the repositioning of attitudes and values that favour and address the position of industry and its related needs (Hickox and Moore, 1990; Shilling, 1990; McEwan, 1991; Marshall, 1997; Jackson and Jordan, 1999). For industry, an education requires student attitudes to fit with that of the ‘ideal worker’. The ideal worker will possess a set of transferable and generic skills but more importantly will have acquired the values and attitudes extolled by industry. As Cohen argues:

The new worker is to 'transcend' narrow trade practices or occupational loyalties, to be highly mobile and individualistic, infinitely adaptable to technological change and yet conserve all the traditional virtues of the work ethic.

(Cohen, 1984, 107)
The notion of an ideal worker implies that an industry compatible rationality will direct the worker's actions and understanding towards the needs of industry. Marshall (1997) identifies this as a kind of 'busnocratic rationality' where workers adopt business ethics and principles (Jordan and Yeomans, 1998). This busnocratic rationality is transmitted to vocational students not only through the open transference of skill and a disciplined attitude, but also more discretely through the very choice and content of vocational subjects.

Shilling (1990) describes this type of rationality as a view of human nature that assumes that individuals will look at how vocational education will assist them to gain employment. Students will therefore choose the academic or vocational alternative that they perceive to be most closely linked to their future employment prospects and aspirations (Heelas and Morris, 1990).

This new theory of human capital (Marginson, 1992) renders a conventional understanding of choice problematic.

The autonomous chooser differs, then, from the personally autonomous individual in that he or she is predisposed to accept the education and training way of life (as increasingly it becomes a major part of culture) and is predisposed towards vocationalism because it is in terms of vocationalist values that quality in education will be defined. If one must choose, then it can only be a vocationally-oriented choice.

(Marshall, 1997, 323)

Although students appear to be free to 'choose' an educational programme best suited to their aspirations, their knowledge and values are produced and reproduced through options defined and constrained by industry (McEwan, 1991). The appearance of a free and autonomous choice is merely that; an appearance, as their choice is severely constrained by the imposition of
business' values. Consequently students will opt for various alternatives as prompted by industry and fluctuations in the vacancies available in the labour market. Due to the nature of the labour market and limited job prospects for school leavers this choice is important. Making the right ‘choice’ is fundamental in gaining employment within the ‘new’ workplace (Bates, 1984; Holt et al, 1987; Gleeson, 1990).

Reorganisation of workplace power

Attempts to reorganise the contemporary workplace have centred on the redistribution of workplace power in favour of industry and employers (Marshall, 1997). Where workers once retained a kind of sovereignty over their knowledge and claimed remuneration for the performance of their specific craft based skills, industry now actively imparts those skills to workers through their own training programmes, many of which are supported by the state through agencies such as the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (Marshall, 1997; Jackson, 1997). This transference of power has several important implications for vocational education in the analysis of skill. As Jackson and Jordan indicate:

In this framework, skill development is being transformed from the chance for individuals to gain bargaining power in the labour market, into an opportunity for employers to gain workers whose knowledge and skill is already tightly harnessed to the interests of business.

(1999, 229)

Firstly, the acquisition of skills has become mediated by the state through organisations such as the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Secondly, the
use of unit standards fragments and atomises the teaching of skill rather than providing an organic, holistic, approach. Thirdly, control over skill in the workforce has shifted from workers to employers who train workers according to industry requirements.

The New Vocationalism and the Discourse of Skill

The education system has previously directed students towards gaining higher credentials as a means of currency in the labour market. A 'good' academic record is based on the perceived value of credentials in the labour market and the 'credit' given for a course has often been seen as more important than the vocational relevance (Gaskell, 1991). As a consequence there is an increasing mismatch between the supply of academically credentialled workers and the employers demand for practically 'skilled' workers (Halsey, Lauder, Brown and Wells, 1997; Aronowitz and De Fazio, 1997).

Any link between the kind of high school programme students have taken and their ability to compete in a particular labour market depends not on specific credentials, but on the development of interests, contacts or skills that link students with specific job opportunities.

(Gaskell, 1991, 74)

In order to meet the needs of the new economy, industry and employers seek a flexible workforce that has an adaptable and transferable skill base (Cohen, 1984; 1997; Marshall, 1997; Dale et al, 1990). Consequently, traditional craft
specific training has been deemed inappropriate due to its perceived inflexibility and narrowly defined skill base (Cohen, 1984; 1997; Gaskell, 1991). The emergence of a ‘new’ discourse of skill in industry training has shifted the focus of vocational training away from craft based, apprenticeship training to a more general, less occupationally specific approach that will prepare an more adaptable and disciplined worker for the new workplace (Gaskell, 1991).

What industries need are people with the abilities to develop new skills, to learn new knowledge, to acquire new concepts and theories and to adapt to technological change with enthusiasm and lack of fear.

(Wellington cited in Gleeson, 1990, 195)

The new discourse of skill encompasses more than just a reformed approach to practical skill training. It is argued by Cohen (1984; 1997) that a change in worker attitudes is necessary to train a new workforce that is adaptable to the changing labour demands driven by rapid technological developments. This is supported by the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES). In conducting research through the Culmar Brunton Poll (1994) the NZES found that, when employing new workers, New Zealand employers firstly sought attitudinal approaches that were appropriate to their particular needs and secondly, transferable and generic skills such as good communication, motivation, punctuality and enthusiasm.

Vocational courses that aim to meet the needs of the new economy aim to provide appropriately skilled workers. Advocates of the new vocationalism claim that the reformation of skill can meet the needs of both industry and workers about to enter the labour market (Dale, et al, 1990;
Marshall, 1997). New vocational courses aim to assist employers by providing pre-trained workers who possess generic, flexible skills that can be adapted to any specific workplace environment (Hayes in Gleeson, 1990; Jackson, 1997; Lewis, 1998). In addition new vocational courses aim to provide students with the ‘right’ skills and attitudes to compete within the labour market.

The transmission of such non-specialised transferable skills to students, however, restricts worker mobility within the labour market. In addition, Gaskell’s (1991) notion of a disciplined worker implies that workers equipped with these skills will assume subordinate, low level positions in order to have any possibility of mobility between employment opportunities. Finn (1984) argues that movement among employment options is directed according to the needs and demands of employers, not workers. The reality of transferable skill acquisition is that workers can only move horizontally across employment options that require a similar skill base with little opportunity for upward mobility (Finn, 1984; Gaskell, 1991).

The shift away from craft based training to skilling has also repositioned the teaching of vocational training. The liberal, progressive pedagogy of school based vocational programmes has shifted to become more closely aligned with industry training. An illustrative example of how there has been a pedagogical shift in skills training is the move from apprentice based approach to competency based approach (CBE) (Jackson, 1993; Broadfoot, 1996; Harris et al, 1995; Tuck and Peddie, 1995; Natale and Joliffe, 1996).
Competency Based Education

Competency based education (CBE) has permeated the school system and post-compulsory education sector over the last two decades. The emergence of CBE in New Zealand has been widespread throughout schooling, post-compulsory training and workplace training. As a result continuity of assessment and teaching practice has been essential to ensure that all providers are operating at the same standards. Consistency of course content and delivery between schools and post-compulsory education has resulted in a 'seamless education system' that would lead to national qualifications wherever the place of study. Underpinning and propelling these changes was the introduction of the Education Amendment Act of 1990. This act paved the way for the creation of a national agency, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), responsible for the development of a framework for national qualifications in schools and post-compulsory education and training (Tuck and Peddie, 1995). The development of this framework saw the introduction of CBE to New Zealand schools and vocational courses such as academy programmes.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is more extensive than similar education authorities in other countries. In addition to the management of CBE, NZQA is responsible for all general, academic, and vocational post compulsory learning from secondary school level through to degree status. It was envisaged by policymakers that the NZQA would “foster
student-centred, competency-based learning and assessment” (Butterworth and Butterworth, 1998, 197) assessable through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The necessity for a national framework arose as a direct response to the need to provide consistency across large numbers of providers offering skills training for entry to the labour market (Barker, 1995). In order to ensure that such training was appropriate for industry’s needs as well as students, Industry Training Organisations (ITO’s) were established in 1992 to oversee the development of unit standards that met the requirements of industry (Harris et al, 1995). A further agency ‘Skill New Zealand’ was established and charged with overseeing and assisting with the assessment and clarification of training between the ITOs and training providers (Olssen and Morris Matthews, 1997).

The re-emergence of vocational training in schools saw the establishment of the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) who were responsible for interpreting CBE in order for schools to establish training consistent with industry needs. As schools increasingly recognised the value of transitional vocational education, several schools adopted training courses like academy programmes based on unit standards that both prepare students for the workplace and offer training towards qualifications on the NQF.

Unit standards and competency based education

The implementation of CBE has resulted in the development of vocational programmes that reposition schooling as significant in transitional
process of moving from school to the workplace. As explained by the Australian National Training Board:

The concept of competency focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace rather than on the learning process; and embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. This is a broad concept of competency in that all aspects of work performance, and not only narrow task skills, are included.

(cited in Harris et al, 1995, 20)

Used in this transitional sense vocational training is often linked to occupational contexts. Proponents of CBE claim that the link to specific occupational roles is the main strength of CBE in defining examinable competencies (Elam in Harris et al. 1995; Tuck and Peddie, 1995; Carmicheal, 1993; Holland, 1993). Learning through occupational roles provides vocational students with a direct transitional route to future career aspirations and choices. The provision of an occupational context also closely aligns competency training with workplace experiences and therefore provides a form of training that is relevant to students’ perceptions of the workplace.

The New Zealand framework of unit standards is designed around four key features identified by the NZQA as essential for a ‘good’ competency based assessment approach (Harris et al, 1995). The first feature is the need for assessment to be clear, uncluttered and possess validity in the sense that it assesses what it claims to assess. Secondly, the assessment should also be designed to be reliably replicated over time by different learners and trainers in different settings. Thirdly, the standards must also be fair and accessible to every learner and open to questioning. Fourthly, the
assessment approach should be flexible so as to cater for a range of student options and abilities.

Basic unit standards in New Zealand cover essential skills that are determined by ITO's in order to produce workers with the skills required by the new economy. The construction of compulsory skills around the new discourse of skill promotes competence in transferable, generic skills:

- Information skills
- Communication skills
- Self-management skills, word and study skills
- Social skills, work and study skills
- Numeracy skills
- Decision-making skills
- Information skills, communication skills

(Harris et al, 1995, 97)

Though these standards and skills can also be taught in an academic context, vocational courses turn the acquisition of these skills into practical, vocationally based competencies that primarily cater for non-academic students (Tuck and Peddie, 1995). The main impetus for establishment of unit standards and CBE has come from vocational education and it is claimed by Tuck and Peddie that there is a "more ready acceptance of competency and authentic testing than there is in the liberal arts, where concepts such as knowledge, wisdom, understanding and excellence are firmly embedded" (1995, 11).
The basis of the NQF, unit standards, is modelled on a competency structure initially envisaged for vocationally relevant training (Butterworth, 1998). Standards are divided into eight levels that are linked to the perceived needs of industry. While the NZQA is not responsible for course content and teaching of unit standards, the agency is responsible for transferring each element of competency based learning into unit standards (Butterworth, 1998; Harris et al, 1995; Tuck and Peddie, 1995). Unit standards then serve as the means through which the learning outcome and the assessment of that outcome are described. Schools have a high degree of autonomy to elect how they will teach a particular unit but not what they will teach. The content of unit standards acquired by schools is already in ready made, pre-packaged curriculum blocks, designed by ITOs and developed by NZQA, that are taught as either core components of a prescribed qualification or as optional subjects (Tuck and Peddie, 1995).

Vocationally based training through a competency approach differs from the apprenticeship, craft based approach, as emphasis has shifted from a 'whole picture' approach to mastery of single units of transferable skill. Units are described as a set of easily definable goals that are observed, measured, and are clearly identified from the outset (Natale and Joliffe, 1996; Jackson, 1993). In order to teach skill in a manner consistent with CBE, however, each goal has a narrow focus and limits the possible approaches and interpretations that can be applied. Practical skill is taught in isolation to theory so as to provide focus and limit the range of possible activities that may be accomplished to achieve competency. Competent standards are claimed to be objective and are "judged in terms of relative performance" in an isolated practical manner such as an automotive trainee changing the oil or
fixing the brakes on a car (Tuck and Peddie, 1995, 11). Harris et al (1995) argue that competency based learning caters for students of all abilities but primarily those who find hands on, practical training of more use in their learning.

The detachment of skill and knowledge, however, renders CBE problematic for many critics (Mac an Ghaill in McEwan, 1990; Tuck, 1995; Jackson, 1993 Field, 1991). Practical skill becomes isolated in actions that the worker competently performs with no apparent theoretical conceptualisation of the whole task. Tuck (1995) argues that in order to ‘master’ a unit of skill, workers must have a conceptual understanding of the action and its implications in addition to the inter-relation between specific tasks. Gleeson (1990) claims that this separation further reinforces the division between academic and non-academic education and therefore asserts the legitimacy of the education system to divide students according to the needs of the labour market. This division occurs because competency based programmes are merely ‘tacked on’ to the mainstream curriculum and are presented as vocational alternatives rather than integrated into the general curriculum (Gleeson, 1990; Korndorffer, 1988).

CBE and vocational programmes

It is generally accepted by practitioners that CBE more appropriately meets the needs of vocationally oriented students by offering greater opportunities to gain skills and qualifications necessary for the workplace. The focus of CBE is on individual achievement rather than comparisons between students (Codd, McAlpine and Poskitt, (1995). Unit standards are
therefore, as Codd et al claim, generally associated with: individual student progress; learning as a process as well as a product; intrinsic motivation and self-evaluation.

Students are drawn to vocational programmes because they often feel disaffection with the academic curriculum. CBE provides students with the opportunity to work at their own pace and at their own level of ability. CBE assesses students on their personal level of competence and does not compare achievement with other students. Therefore the element of competition is removed as CBE simply becomes achievement of easily definable personal goals. As Broadfoot (1996) and Tuck and Peddie (1995) argue the removal of peer competition can encourage non-academic students to achieve greater personal results. Failure is also reduced as students who do not achieve their personal goals can try again at a later stage (Natale and Joliffe, 1996). As Gaskell (1986) argues the chance of failure is so low that it would generally only occur if the student refused to do the work.

Although CBE offers greater opportunities for vocationally oriented students there are practical limitations for the introduction of CBE to vocational programmes. Tuck (1995) argues, CBE does not allow for students with different ability levels to work within a single classroom as the teaching of standards at different levels requires access to different resources. The assessment procedure reduces all students to the same level of achievement with no recognition of exceptional ability (Elley, 1995). Elley argues that the reduction of grading scales to either a ‘pass’ or a ‘fail’ does not distinguish between the excellent student and the average student. This form of grading is based upon the NZQA’s assertion that students and
teachers would be 'better served' by only one level of assessment (Peddie, 1995).

Elley (1995) also claims that the arbitrary separation of unit standards into eight levels can not provide an accurate measure or division of subject content. Codd et al (1995) reinforce this claim by arguing that initial trials in the United Kingdom found that certain subjects such as English could not be readily collapsed into a skills-based approach as the content could not be divided into small units and assigned clearly to one level of achievement. Vocational subjects could effectively be separated, however, as there was a clear separation of practical tasks from theoretical knowledge. Further to this critics of standards based assessment claim that standardised testing may result in an initial short term increase in students' test scores but the long term result of this approach to learning and teaching is that it can not sustain teacher or student interest for any substantial length of time (Hopkins in Codd et al, 1995).

Conclusion

This chapter has located the re-emergence of vocational education in schools within the context of the new vocationalism (Gleeson, 1987, Hickox and Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994; Marshall, 1997, Cohen 1984; Gaskell, 1986; Grubb cited in Lewis, 1998). I have argued that adherence to a new vocational approach to vocational training is reliant on three fundamental principles: the incursion of industry into curricula development and implementation; the synchronisation of student subjectivity's to identify with the values of industry; a new discourse of skill that harnesses these values and attitudes through a
generic and transferable skill base taught through a competency based approach.

The incursion of industry into curricula design and development creates an explicit assumption that such courses will address the deficiencies of the labour market as these courses are created by industry, for industry. The new discourse of skill assures that students will enter the workforce as models of the 'ideal worker', whose needs and desires are linked to those of industry in order for employers to sustain their re-organised position of power in the workplace. The transference of power from workers to employers redefines workers needs as subordinate to employers in the strive for social efficiency. I have also argued that although employment opportunities may be increased, these opportunities are limited to the bottom end of the labour market (Moore 1984; Finn, 1984; McEwan, 1991).

The erosion of democratic participation in society is also compounded by the teaching of these skills in a competency based approach. Critics (Mac an Ghaill in McEwan, 1990; Tuck, 1995; Gaskell, 1991; Field, 1991) argue that CBE distinguishes between practical competencies and knowledge and produces a workforce with little understanding of what they are doing. Standards based assessment has not been clearly integrated to the mainstream system and therefore promotes the distinction between academic and vocational learning. Nevertheless, CBE and standards based assessment critics (Tuck and Peddie, 1995; Broadfoot, 1996) agree that this method of education provides greater opportunities for low achieving students through individual attainment that is not based on competition between students.
In the following chapter I will investigate the re-emergence of vocational training in New Zealand schools through the academy programmes. These programmes have attempted to address several of the issues raised in this chapter and in doing so have created transitional programmes that are closely linked to the perceived needs of industry.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ACADEMY STORY

In attempting to synchronise the sometimes disparate needs of youth, schools, and the labour market, academy programmes in New Zealand have come to embody the theories underlying the new vocationalism. Vocational programmes are now the primary vehicles used to educate the considerable number of youth who do not seek entry to tertiary education. By focusing curricula on the students' intended employment destinations, vocational programmes can inspire motivation and achievement among those who traditionally have not excelled in the academic mainstream. In this chapter I will examine academy programmes and the underlying rationale that has been used to capture the interest of non-academic students.

I have divided this chapter into three sections. In the first section I will investigate the historical precursor of the academy concept in the establishment of Strachan's academy programme in Rangiora from 1917 to 1950. Secondly, I will introduce the academy concept as it has been adopted and developed by high schools in New Zealand during the 1990's. I shall do this by outlining why such programmes were necessary and then explore the evolution of the concept of the sports academy into the concept of vocational academies. Under the sports academy model students are taught through sport the skills and attitudes needed to gain qualifications and subsequent employment opportunities, whereas under the vocational model students are taught skills and attitudes through an overriding vocational context.
Antecedent of the Academy Concept

Although today's sports and vocational academies appear to be a new concept in contemporary schooling, the teaching of employable skills through students' interests was, in fact, used eighty years ago by J.E. Strachan in his academy style programme based in Rangiora. Although not directly linked, contemporary programmes bear a startling resemblance to Strachan's academy.

Strachan's Academy Model

When vocational training in New Zealand was its peak in the first half of the twentieth century an 'alternative' programme, that was considered diverse, was implemented at a school in a small town just outside Christchurch. This programme, as detailed by Openshaw (1995), was initially deemed experimental by its creator J.E.Strachan. Its longevity (1917-1950), however, indicates that it was a successful experiment.

As sole teacher in a rural school, Strachan felt that the mainstream secondary school curriculum did not meet the needs of children at his school who, for the most part, would be employed on their parents' farms once they left school. Strachan used agriculture to provide both a framework and point of departure for subject disciplines such as biology, chemistry, mathematics, geography, and geology. As a traditional academic education would be of little use to these students, he designed his own curriculum that was based on an 'organic' theoretical knowledge in order to encourage social skills such as critical thinking and participation in a democratic citizenship. The teaching of these subjects through practical agricultural examples differed considerably
from the traditional classroom based mode of teaching and gave students practical experience in industry that met the needs of the local farming community, whilst still adhering to nationally recognised school qualifications. Strachan’s academy model of training endured for many years and it was only upon announcement of his retirement that the school discontinued this approach to vocational training.

The ‘academy concept’ re-emerged in the 1990’s as a contemporary solution to labour market demands. The framework of the emergent academy programmes is startlingly similar to Strachan’s agricultural academy model in that contemporary programmes also aim to cater to students who may not continue into further study. The Garden City academy concept, however, differs from Strachan’s programme as contemporary academy courses are organised to produce an industry focused workforce whose values and attitudes emulate those of industry rather than an agriculturally focused workforce.

The Garden City Academy Concept

The 'academy concept' re-emerged in one Garden City school in 1997 and was regarded as a bold experiment by the local community, council, and education policy makers. Grenache College is positioned in one of the least privileged suburbs of Garden City. More than any other school Grenache College has suffered from the 'spiral of decline; that is, the tendency of more affluent, predominantly white students to leave in favour of other schools in more privileged areas of the city. The impact of neo-liberal reforms and the marketisation of schools has seen schools such as Grenache become more
polarised along ethnic and class lines (Hughes, 1999). As Brett (1997, 75) argues, Grenache College has had "the poorest and brownest pupil profile in the city (26 percent Maori, 8.3 per cent Polynesian)."

Although the national percentage of Maori students leaving school with no qualifications had decreased from 68.5 percent to 37.7 percent between 1977 and 1997, there has been no significant improvement since 1992. By 1997 only 40.2 percent of Maori were leaving school with sixth or seventh form qualifications compared with more than 70 percent of Non-Maori (Te Puni Kokiri, 1998). The inability of these students to achieve at a senior level resulted in Grenache College struggling to keep senior retention rates at a satisfactory level.

The school centred on teaching a traditional curriculum that directed students towards further academic study rather than providing them with marketable skills. Consequently many students left Grenache College disaffected with the academic curriculum and with few skills to gain work. Although these students left school early to seek employment, changes to the labour market meant that there were often few opportunities open to them. The school's Maori Job Placement Officer (JPO) stated that:

We found that too many of our people were leaving school 1: with no qualifications 2: no skills. So consequently when they left school no one really wanted them.

Job Placement Officer, Interview 13/05/99

As a result of this situation a large number of these students ended up unemployed and were too young to claim government assistance, whilst some other students returned to schools merely as a way of filling in time.
Faced with the growing body of disenchanted, uninterested students that were just biding time, the JPO investigated options designed to engage student interest and enthusiasm. After discussions with students and teachers the JPO identified that the school’s traditional academic programme that focused on entrance to tertiary study and university did not respond to the needs of a large number of students who had no intention of moving into the tertiary sector. Instead of taking these students out of the school system entirely, the JPO at the school developed an 'academy' programme that would fit within the confines of the present system. The new programme would, however, specifically meet the needs of these non-academic students with the express purpose of helping them gain employment. The basis of the academy programme was to develop a programme of studies centred on students' interests.

The JPO believed that by identifying the interests and expectations of the students, the school could design a programme that was explicitly linked to the students educational needs. To determine the interests and needs of the students, the JPO had students complete a profile that highlighted their interests, aspirations and perceived employment expectations.

We do a profile thing on students. It's pretty basic. Asks them how they are, where they are from, like IWI, hapu... You know which ethnicity. We just ask a lot of general questions in regards to interest, what they do... We ask them a lot of questions about examination results but this is the key one for me; 'where do they see their future'.

JPO, Interview 13/05/99
The JPO found that there was a significant interest in sport at both recreational and vocational levels. Many students had expressed a desire to become professionally involved in the sports industry but few of these students had the necessary academic qualifications to gain entry to tertiary sports training courses. As a result a programme was designed with the emphasis on rugby. Despite the fact that there was a greater interest in rugby league, rugby union was chosen as organisers believed it would legitimate the programme and have it accepted within various community groups throughout the city.

In an attempt to motivate these students to achieve in non-sporting arenas the JPO set out to establish an educational programme based on students' interest that would enhance the students' practical sporting career prospects as well as their educational needs. What differed about these programmes was the identification and recognition of the students needs and interests.

We are here for the well being of the students, the resources belong to the students but we don’t always meet their needs. So now re-enter the concept of academies. We identify here, in the profile, what each young person needs . . . Employers, what they are looking for in young people sometimes is . . . well, the qualifications play a distant last but they want young people who feel good about themselves, motivated, reliable and all those sorts of things and we thought why don’t we focus on changing the attitudes in the first instance . . .

JPO, Interview 13/05/99
The JPOs comments reveal the degree to which the academy concept encompassed the needs of employers, and local communities as much as those of students.

**The Sports Academy**

Thirty-two students enrolled in the inaugural sports academy. Although academy programmes were open to all senior students, the sports model concentrated on those who had either 4 years of secondary school education regardless of qualifications attained and students who had officially left school for 3 complete terms. The 'school-within-a-school' sports academy involved two key directives; learning through interest and the direct application of skills. Students were still involved in mainstream cultural aspects of the school such as school assemblies but their learning took place outside the mainstream classes.

**Organisation of the sports academy programme**

Although grounded in the school spirit, the full-time sports academy was all-inclusive and did not require students to attend any mainstream academic classes. The academy incorporated core subjects such as English and Maths that were, as indicated by industry, necessary requirements for an adequate entry to the workforce. Core subjects taught in the academy included Sports Nutrition, Sports Management, Biochemistry, Motivation Techniques, Personal Grooming/Hygiene, Rules and Regulations, Communication English and Computing. As with Strachan's programme, these subjects were taught to students by relating the required skill or
attribute to the students' interests but this time the vehicle was sport and more specifically, rugby. A skill such as teamwork was portrayed as the team working together on a playing field. Management could be structured as team leadership skills on the sports field. What the course aimed to do was to enhance the student's health, growth, personal well being and job opportunities through sport.

As well as taking the compulsory subjects, students had the option of taking either mainstream classes or a list of further electives related to the academy. Optional academy subjects included Sports Management, Sports Science, Law, Tikanga Maori, and Self-Image. Students who opted to take mainstream subjects for their 'options' could complete courses of study towards national qualifications at School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate or Bursary level. This was an important part of the organisational process of the academy programmes. By allowing students to take part in mainstream study they could complete qualifications that they had previously missed and in doing so satisfy entry requirements for various study and employment options.

The sports academy was an inexpensive option compared to other training programmes, and therefore, appealed to the returning students facing an uncertain future in the labour market. Enrolment fees were the same as general school fees and any extra financial input was gained through accessing government funding for student places, the involvement of corporate sponsors and industry and local council assistance.

Local council officials responded favourably to the success of the initial sports programme, which successfully saw ninety percent of its students placed in full or part time positions at the completion of the course either in
sports related areas or in Army, Navy or government departments. The city council has since assisted the set-up of similar programmes in seven local schools and over fifty schools throughout the country.

Limitations of the sports academy

Despite the sports academy's successes there were three aspects of the sports academy that were problematic. While the sports academy claimed to prepare students for future employment, their actual career options were limited by their individual course choices. By completing the course full-time, students were effectively restricted from achieving higher school qualifications. Although the programme allowed for academic students to take mainstream subjects as their optional subjects many students elected to study the optional academy subjects focused on sport, thus limiting their ability to complete formal school qualifications. Nor could the sports academy, at this stage, provide a nationally recognised qualification in either sports or academic pursuits. The programme was not accredited by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) although students could complete some unit standards and leave with a certificate of completion from the school.

Secondly, the career expectations of the students were seldom realised through the academy programme. The programme was designed to produce a better work ethos in the students involved and in doing so prepare them for entry level positions in the workforce. Students did not always identify this objective and often saw the programme as a means of gaining entry to their 'dream' destinations in either sport, the Armed Services, and Police force. By introducing students to the idea of careers in sport, the programme
may have set up a false expectation among many of its participants that they all could be professional sports players. Only the very best sports person could be assured of some degree of professional status in a country with a limited professional sporting sector, while the majority did not 'have what it takes' (JPO, Interview 13/05/99).

For those that would not make the top rankings academic ability and qualifications became important. One such example is the position of a year 1 student who after applying to an Army intake was turned down due to a lack of qualifications although they did look favourably at her academy success. Subsequently many of the first academy programme's graduates were successfully employed by the government's welfare agency. Although the programmes had motivated and encouraged these students to learn, it had not presented them with the opportunity to continue onto the career of their choice, and their actual employment stood in marked contrast to their desired career aspirations.

Thirdly, the programme had not catered for students who were not interested in sport. Consequently sport was a limited motivational vehicle for many low achieving students still struggling either in the mainstream or in the labour market. In fact many of these students felt that the sports academy was for the 'thicko jocks' who were only seeking professional sporting positions. These students wanted an academy programme that was vocationally oriented and relevant to their future experiences in the workplace so that the programme could assist in that transition. Thus, an alternative programme was developed to meet the needs of the non-sporting school population.
The Trades/Vocational Model

Vocational academy programmes work along the same lines as the sports academies but instead use specific occupational based learning to motivate students. Many schools in the city have adapted the academy model to cater for the vocational needs of their students. Unlike the sports academies, vocational/trade academies recognise and incorporate the needs of industry into the curriculum.

Organisation of the trades/vocational academy programmes

Vocational/trade academy options are also determined by profiling the students' interests and career aspirations. Whilst the basic structure of the sports model has been retained, the vocational academies have several organisational differences. Like sports academies vocational/trades academies are centred on a specific occupational area. Whereas the sports academy focused on rugby, vocational academies take one part of industry and concentrate on training students for employment in that industry. Various industry options for academy programmes include; Automotive, Trades, Electrical, Hospitality and Tourism, Armed Services, Office Practice, Childcare and Outdoor Recreation.

The vocational/trades academy programmes are designed around the acquisition of skill through introducing students to the requirements of their chosen industry. Taught in an occupational context that is relevant to students' future career options, vocational academies have close contact with industry organisations to ensure a 'good fit' between curriculum and the workplace. This match is essential in making a realistic transition from school to the
workplace. Work based tasks are taught by teachers who have considerable industry experience through unit standards.

The vocational academies have been structured in a way that allows students to continue to expand and add to their academic qualifications while completing their vocational training. Unlike Grenache College's school-within-a-school sports model vocational academies accomplish this by operating part-time programmes that require students to elect mainstream subjects in order to enrol as fulltime students.

As with sports academy students, most vocational academy students have few qualifications and it is important to the schools involved that they offer every opportunity for these students to expand their academic base. Students subject choice is guided by careers advisors, guidance counsellors and schooolteachers who provide the students with every opportunity to be successful in their schooling. As with the sports academy, vocational academy students can take mainstream subjects at the level that suits their ability whether it is School Certificate or Bursary.

The continuation of vocational academy students' involvement in the mainstream academic system is for three reasons. Firstly, the school can encourage and provide the opportunity for students to pick up academic qualifications as a means of assisting their employment prospects. Secondly, the schools feel that dividing academic and vocational education entirely will limit the options available to students and clearly divides the school into academic and non-academic streams. Thirdly, the interaction of academy students with students in the mainstream academic will limit any peer pressure associated with the less academic nature of the vocational
programmes. Consequently academy programmes would not be seen as a way of taking non-academic students out of mainstream classes.

The academy programmes, therefore, fit clearly into the required senior curriculum of schools that have adopted them as alternative forms of education for senior students. Each student experiences the academy ‘model’ in different ways depending on their future aspirations and previous experiences of schooling and the labour market. In the next chapter I will outline the methods I used to understand these students’ individual experiences, and the organisational underpinnings of vocational/trades academy programmes.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Until recently there has been little research into New Zealand academy programmes. The few media descriptions (Brett, 1997; Cassie, 1998; Edginton, 1997; Lancaster, 1997a, 1997b; Crean, 1997), have tended to highlight the sports academies, addressing little more than the basic organisation and funding of the curricula of the vocational trades academies that exist alongside them. There is yet to be any in-depth analysis of the academy concept and the impact of its organisational structure on students. This study, therefore, provides an introduction to the investigation of academy programmes.

In this chapter I will outline the approach adopted in my study of academy programmes in Garden City. I will set the context within which the study of Malbec High School emerged, and then introduce the methodology underlying this study. Finally, I will outline the method used for collection, organisation and analysis of findings.

Setting the Context

The study was designed to consider the implications of academy programmes at Malbec High School and the impact on the students involved. Malbec High School is located in an industrial working class suburb of Garden City. The school has an ethnically mixed roll of about 550 students (Ministry of Education, 1999). Of that total 184 students are enrolled in what is considered a senior school programme (years 12-14), sixty-six of which are
enrolled in vocational academy programmes. Although the senior school has a diverse ethnic composition (Maori and Pacific Island students (15 percent), students of Pakeha/European descent (63 percent) and those of Asian or ‘Other’ ethnic origin (22 percent)), the academy programmes tend to attract mainly Maori and Pacific Island (25 percent) and Pakeha/European students (72 percent). There is a slightly higher percentage of females enrolled in academy programmes (62 percent) but this is consistent with, and representative of, the spread of girls and boys enrolled at senior level.

There were two reasons why I selected Malbec High School as the sample school. Demographically Malbec High School is broadly similar to the other school in this study, Grenache College. Malbec is also situated in a similar socio-economic area of the city to Grenache College, the original academy model. Malbec also faced similar problems with senior retention rates and is placed in a similar position on the results table and decile rating to Grenache.

Secondly, Malbec had chosen not to adopt the sports model of academy, as many other schools had, but instead had opted solely for the vocational model. The Deputy Principal of Malbec had indicated that this was due to the school’s attempt to make the courses vocationally relevant and related to the students’ career choices and interests (Interview: 14/05/99). The school had determined the students’ career interests by surveying senior classes in the previous year to this study. At the time of the study, the school was considering extending its vocational courses but would still not extend into a sports based academy due primarily to a lack of interest from students. As Malbec High School had opted solely for a vocational model whereas other schools had adopted sports academies in addition both or primarily the
sports model, the intent of the school's vocationally based academy curriculum prompted further investigation.

Methodology

Rather than entering Malbec High School and formulating my own judgments of what I thought the programme was achieving, I let the people involved in the day to day operation and participation of these programmes shape my story and the direction of my thesis. While some of my notions were formed by material published in the media, I nevertheless made strenuous attempts to allow students and teachers to direct the shape the thesis.

My primary concern was with 'how' the academy programmes were developed and continued to evolve, and the resultant impact on students and teachers. In using this approach it was important to recognise that the students and teachers were not passive recipients of the social relations involved in academy programmes, but that they were active 'subjects' that shaped the evolution of the courses. This approach, based on institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) places its importance in the positioning of the subject as the expert. In studying the academy programmes it was essential that I entered my interviewing and analysis as a follower, letting the students and teachers/directors as well as the findings lead and direct me toward conclusions rather than imposing my own.

As a means to gain entry into the various social relations of schooling and training with regard to academy programmes, I chose only one school as the basis of my study (Smith, 1987).
Method

The interpretations presented here draw on data I collected from individual interviews, questionnaires, and focus group interviews. There were nine interviews conducted with teacher/directors and administrators and five focus groups with students, each one lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. All of them were transcribed. A questionnaire survey of students was also conducted to gain quantifiable data and guidance for developing a direction for the focus groups with students.

The Interviews

Before embarking on the study of how Malbec High School had adapted the academy programme and how this had impacted on students and staff, it was necessary to investigate the origins of the academy concept. This was achieved by interviewing the Job Placement Officer (JPO) at the first school to implement the programme, Grenache College. The findings from this particular interview were instrumental in the creation of the academy story in Chapter Three. After one informal meeting and one semi-structured interview with the JPO it was apparent that Malbec High School, the school selected for the study, had adopted a model that differed significantly from the original programme at Grenache College. The primary difference was that Grenache College organised their academies into fulltime school-within-a-school models whereas Malbec integrated the part time academy options with mainstream schooling.
Following these interviews, I felt it was necessary to gauge the overall impression of academy programmes within Malbec High School. I entered the subsequent interview situations with teachers/directors and administrators with a *naivete* that placed me in the role of learner (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). There was little if anything available to read as preparation for the interviews and therefore my interviews with teachers/directors needed to tell me as much about the academy programmes as possible. Firstly I interviewed the Deputy Principal, who had taken on the role of administrator for the academy programmes, in order to ascertain the reasons for the introduction of programmes that were so different to what had previously been run at the school. The senior school careers advisor was also interviewed, along with the Director of each academy programme offered at the school: Nannying, Outdoor Education, Office Practice and Automotive and Hospitality and Tourism. The Hospitality and Tourism academy had two directors, one for Tourism and one for Hospitality, both of whom were interviewed.

Academy Directors were teachers at the school who were in charge of the administration and teaching of a selected academy programme. All the academy directors had been employed in the school prior to the establishment of academy programmes. These teachers were chosen to develop the programmes, and to interview, as they have all had extensive involvement in the industry related to their academy. All of the teachers/directors had worked in the industry for at least seven years with one having been involved for nearly twenty years. Although these teachers had a lot of contact time with the academy classes they were also still involved in the day to day teaching of mainstream subjects within the school examination system. I felt it was important to interview all the teachers/directors involved in
the programme because, their role was pivotal in the planning and organisation of each individual academy programme. As the only teachers involved in the programmes they were in constant contact with the academy students and received constant feedback. The teachers/directors also had direct involvement in determining the selection criteria for the programmes together with responsibility for determining appropriate forms of instruction and assessment.

My interviews with teachers/directors were, by necessity, semi-structured so as to cover certain key areas surrounding the programmes. These questions were open-ended investigations into how the teachers/directors experienced the programmes and the curriculum design. Although some of these questions may have prompted reasonably predictable responses from teachers, other unplanned questions were introduced in response to the teacher/directors comments.

The Questionnaire

Following the interviews with the Deputy Principal and the teachers/directors of the academies, I designed a questionnaire (see appendix) for the students enrolled in academy programmes. Due to time and financial constraints it was not possible to hold focus groups for all the students involved in the programme and the questionnaire provided an appropriate instrument through which to include the perspectives of all students. The questionnaire was designed to act as a guide to develop themes and direction for the focus group interviews. Research questions
were generated from three key themes (see below) that focused on the students directly involved in the programme. These themes were:

- The background of students choosing academy programmes
- The impact of academy programmes on students' attitudes to school and work
- Student responses to the various academy options

Students were invited to respond to the questionnaire if they were enrolled in one of the five academy programmes offered at Malbec: Hospitality and Tourism, Nannying, Automotive, Outdoor Academy and Office Practice. Students were contacted via academy directors. The questionnaire was completed during class time in June 1999, by fifty-three of the sixty-six students enrolled in academy programmes. The remaining thirteen students were either on work placements during this period or they did not return the completed questionnaires.

Data gathered from the questionnaires was both qualitative and quantitative. A small amount of data on student enrolment details was also collected through school records. The quantitative responses were coded and then entered into a computer to ascertain frequencies, while the qualitative responses were analysed for emergent themes. Three thematic areas were then used as the basis for focus group interviews. These themes were:

- the students' experiences and attitudes to school before the academy programme,
- the links between the academy and their desired career,
- the impact of the academy programme on students' experiences and attitudes to school.

The Focus Groups

Focus groups were chosen for this study due to the effectiveness in collecting qualitative data from larger groups of participants (Rountree and Laing, 1996). The age of the students was also a consideration in selecting focus groups as all the students interviewed were in their mid to late teens. Focus group settings were chosen over individual interviews because they remove the intensity of a one to one exchange, and allow a more relaxed, casual discussion that allows for support from peers. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) indicate, adolescents feel more relaxed and are more open and stimulated to talk around a group of their peers. It was often the case that a group interview encouraged students to extend what they had said having heard the responses of other students to their comments (Patton, 1990).

Unfortunately as detailed by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), and as discovered by myself, this was not always positive. Some students would direct ‘put downs’ towards other students if they did not agree and other students engaged in banter. A small amount of time was spent in each focus group discussing and allowing for this.

Five focus groups were conducted between July and September 1999, one for each of the academy groups operating at the school. Each tape-recorded group interview consisted of 4-5 students and lasted for about 45 minutes. I felt that it was important to have a representative spread of students
of age, gender and academic qualifications. As the school was reluctant to release details on students' qualifications at this stage it was left to the teachers' discretion to select students. After consultation, eighteen students were selected, ten girls and eight boys. Four of these students were sixteen years of age, nine were seventeen years of age and five were eighteen years. The majority of students interviewed had little or no formal school qualifications with four having sixth form certificate subjects, eight with school certificate subjects and six students having no school qualifications (see Table 1).

Table 1: School qualifications and number of subjects of sample group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Certificate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form Certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were also selected with respect to their attitude to schooling. The range of attitudes was relatively small as most students chose academy programmes because they had become disillusioned with the mainstream academic system. Nevertheless, some academy students did view mainstream academic schooling favourably, and four of these students were selected to participate in the focus groups. The remaining fourteen students included in the focus groups were described by their teachers as having 'switched off' to mainstream schooling.

Issues were also raised with regard to perceived authority and the possibility that it may have restricted the flow of information (Limerick,
Burgess-Limerick and Grace, 1996; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). The way I was introduced to the students by staff often presented me in an authoritative role. Although some of the teachers at the school encouraged students to call them by their first name, many teachers did not and consequently some introduced me as Miss Galt. This form of introduction made it very difficult for some of the students to relate to me on a personal level. The first part of each focus group, therefore, concentrated on making the students feel relaxed and willing to talk openly.

I entered the focus group without a set of pre-determined questions. I deliberately used a less structured approach that took its direction from the response to an open ended question such as ‘Could we start with you telling me a bit about yourself?’ (Limerick, Burgess-Limerick and Grace, 1996). This approach appeared to settle the students into the interview process and gave them an opportunity to start the interview by talking about themselves and their families - a subject they were expert in. Having developed an interview guide (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) of the direction I wished the focus groups to take I could pick up on student comments and pursue those, which allowed the interviews to progress as relaxed, informal group discussions.

**Organisation of Data**

Data from the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups were coded into thematic categories. These categories became the principle themes of my research findings. A title was developed for each thematic category so that they could be studied as analytic units. After more careful analysis and consideration, several of the analytic units were melded with
others. Though the questionnaire responses were largely quantitative, there was room for students to undertake qualitative explanations of various responses. This qualitative data was analysed in much the same way as the focus group transcripts.

**Analysis**

To analyse the data it proved necessary to immerse myself in the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups. After initial readings I collated a few topics that were re-occurring frequently enough to be considered significant. These became the thematic categories that evolved from the data. It is important with this kind of research to not impose a pre-determined framework on the findings and with this in mind I continued to search the data for other dominant strands of thought. The themes developed through constant reference to a particular subject by either student or academy director (Rountree and Laing, 1996; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). The themes were then grouped into two major over-riding categories that are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

Within these broad areas of investigation were several smaller themes which I used to organise the findings into manageable units (Rountree and Laing, 1996). The first major category examines the organisational aspects of the programmes using data from the teachers/directors and administrators. The findings from the teachers/directors and administrators suggested that there is a strong industry involvement in both the design and implementation of academy programmes. Evidence of this involvement is exemplified by the high degree of industry involvement in the actual curriculum and programme
design. The findings also suggested that industry involvement and values have permeated into the assessment practices and interpretation of employable skills within academy programmes.

The second category that evolved from the findings was centered on the attitude of the students and their perceptions of both schooling and academy programmes. One of the primary themes to emerge was the low level of qualifications of the students attending academy programmes. The background qualifications of students entering academy programmes was important in order to build up a profile of a typical ‘academy student’. The students’ attitude to schooling provided a second element in this ‘profile’ due to the tendency of academy students to have ‘switched off’ to previous school subjects. By contrast, most found that the academy was relevant and stimulated their desire to learn. Despite their attitudes to mainstream education, the students’ choice of non-compulsory mainstream subjects also had strong connection to the relevance of their academy subjects in the workplace. Employment was a strong underlying theme both in the relationship of the students’ part time employment to academy programmes and the links between the academies and their future aspirations and career prospects.

\[1\] School decile ratings are determined by the Ministry of Education. Schools are numbered from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) according to the socio-economic status of the surrounding neighbourhood.
CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

My entry into and understanding of academy programmes has been shaped by the teachers/directors, administrators and students participating in the academy programmes at Malbec High School. My initial understanding of academy programmes was based primarily on the interpretations and writings of the few journalists who previously have investigated the origins of the academy concept. These findings and the subsequent analysis seek to reflect the daily experiences of those people involved in the programmes and provide an understanding of the programmes. To do this, and effectively gauge the experiences and attitudes of the students, teachers/directors, and administrators involved in these academy programmes I have set aside my own understanding as developed through the media reports, and allowed the participants to tell their own stories. What became apparent from these responses was the marked motivation and enthusiasm of the participants. These programmes were, indeed, offering interested students a chance to bridge the gap between school and employment. If the passion the teachers and students displayed is a true indication of the progress these programmes have made, then the academy programmes are an important success within the Malbec High School population.

This chapter has been organised into two parts that provide the 'stories' of the teacher/directors and administrators, and the students involved in Malbec High School’s academy programmes. The first part tells the story of academy programmes through the perspective of the teachers/directors
and administrators. The main thrust of this part is to illuminate the organisational aspects of the academy programmes. Whilst the data used in this section is primarily from the interviews with teachers/directors and administrators, at times data from the focus groups with students is used in support of findings from the teachers/directors.

The second part of this chapter allows the students to tell their story about the impact of the academy programmes on their experiences of schooling and the transition to their chosen workplace settings. These findings are based primarily on the students' responses to both the focus groups and the questionnaire and are, at times, substantiated through reference to interviews with the teachers/directors and administrators.

The Teacher/Directors and Administrator’s Stories

This section is divided into three parts. In the teachers/directors story I use findings from interviews with teachers/directors and administrators to suggest that academy programmes have strong links with industry. The teachers/directors and administrators stress the importance of designing the programmes to meet industry needs so that the courses are providing a ‘realistic’ transition from school to the workplace. Through these findings I demonstrate that the programmes have achieved these close links by involving industry in the general curriculum design and also by offering employment skills programmes in conjunction with the academy course of study. I will also show that academy programmes have moved away from the
traditional apprenticeship, craft based, approach to vocational training towards transferable generic work skills. This shift has been enacted largely through the use of competency based assessment and unit standards.

Meeting the Needs of Industry

The data provided from all the teachers/directors and administrators interviewed suggests that academy programmes have strong links with industry for both curriculum development and assessment. The curriculum has been designed along industry guidelines by the use of unit standards for teaching and assessment material. Competencies are designed by the Industry Training Organisations (ITO’s) in that industry area sector and are directed towards what employers require in a specific industry environment. This includes gaining particular skills, attitudes, and meeting market needs. The standards are then assessed by industry professionals to ensure that all potential employees are reaching a standard recognisable by other industry professionals. By involvement in the design of the curriculum, industry can direct the type of skills that the students learn at the academies and in turn can reduce the requirement for on the job training. These links allow the programmes to directly link skills training to the needs of the labour market.

The data also suggests that the training students receive through links to industry may be seen as beneficial in enhancing their employment prospects. This will be discussed further in the second part of this chapter that addresses the students’ responses to academy programmes.
Programme design

The academy concept was designed with the needs of industry and students firmly in mind. There are two ways in which industry has become involved in the training of students through academy programmes. The importance of linking industry and schooling was articulated by both teachers/directors and the Job Placement Officer (JPO):

Q: Why design a programme like the academies?

What we need to do and what I need to do, as an individual is to make sure the academies run in line with industry. What I don't want to do is create something that there is no employment opportunities for. I think that is where training and education fits into the system now. It is more from a demand need from the industry but we just need to make sure that we can provide training for these young people.

(Job Placement Officer, Interview 13/05/99)

The second is by the direct involvement of industry into the planning and design of the curriculum.

Curriculum design

The vocational academies have been designed to promote strong links with local business. This has been achieved by the use of unit standards as a method of tuition and assessment. As detailed in Chapter One, unit standards are designed through organisations consisting of various industry groups. These Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are responsible for
ensuring that the skills gained through unit standards enable a level of competency in a particular industry.

There are two parts to academy programmes that encompass the use of unit standards that will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The first stage is the use of competency based education and learning (CBE/L) to teach students their academy subjects. The second use of unit standards to meet industry requirements is in the compulsory completion of the National Certificate of Employment by all academy students. One example of the use of CBE is the automotive academy that trains students towards the National Certificate in Automotive Trades (level 2) and other courses use a combination of unit standards to award students with a school-based certificate of achievement. These unit standards can then be accredited towards any national certificate encompassing their completion. The careers advisor indicates the links to industry in the following:

What we did is we looked at where the kids were going, so we pinpointed the areas and then it was mainly my job as a liaison person. I contacted the ITO's, Industry Training Organisations, and said this is what we wanted to do, what unit standards etc, have you got at these levels, in other words what are programmes, so therefore we are actually teaching the same programmes. In fact the Hospitality course is teaching at a higher level than the TOP's course at the [city] academy so we are actually coming in at a level above that. The automotive trades we are teaching to the industry standards and we are being assessed by industry people and the same with the office practice. So the industry has based their training programmes on businesses but we also have got an idea of which businesses out there are wanting students and what they want from students.

(Careers Advisor, Interview 11/06/99)
Employment Skills Programme

The employment skills programme offered to students can be completed at either sixth or seventh form level by most senior school students at Malbec High School. Those students who plan to carry on into tertiary study have the option of opting out of this subject, but for those who will be seeking employment, especially academy students, this course is compulsory.

The National Certificate in Employment Skills prepares students in several ways with the aim of assisting entry to the workforce. Subjects include communication skills such as reading, listening and discussing, as well as basic keyboard skills and time management skills.

The National Certificate in Employment Skills is awarded to people who have demonstrated competence in literacy, oracy, numeracy and other personal and technical skills. These skills have been identified by a wide range of employers as being important in the workplace.

(NZQA, 2000, 2)

By using unit standards as the basis of teaching and assessment practices in academy programmes, the school seeks to meet the needs of industry by producing workers with the required skills. The primary focus of unit standards is skill acquisition and competency based assessment examines the practical act of completing a task rather than theorising about it as in conventional school programmes. This kind of curriculum draws non-academic students to academy programmes and provides them with successful achievement levels.
Towards a Redefined Discourse of Skill

The school, recognising the importance of meeting industry needs to run an efficient course and assist students to gain employment, worked closely with industry and determined that as employers required generic skills rather than qualifications, the courses would be organised with that in mind.

Employers skill requirements

Academy programmes were designed to provide students with the skill base that was required by local industry in order to connect the students learning with their future employment needs.

Q: So how did you design the courses?

A couple of years ago we had conferences with business people locally and we had a sit down meeting and said when you employ school leavers what are the things that you look for and qualifications came in really low.

(Careers Advisor, Interview 11/06/99)

I went on a course last year and that is what employers said through a consultancy and they said that that is what they need the general office things, not specifically computer. That is what they are looking for so hopefully that is what we are targeting for.

(Director - Office academy, Interview 11/06/99)

Nearly all of the students recognised what would likely assist them gain employment and indicated that learning skills was a significant factor in their decision to attend academy programmes.
Q: Why are you doing this programme?

I wasn't learning nothing in school so I thought I might get some skills while I am here. I can get the qualifications later.

(Automotive Academy student 1, FG 19/08/99)

I wanted to go back to school and hopefully get some skills to get a job. Like learn all about cars and stuff.

(Automotive Academy student 2, FG 19/08/99)

The students themselves identified skills as being one of the most appealing reasons for attending academy programmes, although the skills the students are learning are not always associated with the industry in which the student is seeking employment.

**Generic and transferable skill acquisition**

Although the students do gain practical experience in an industry of their choice, they are mainly learning skills that are general and transferable. It is often the attitude and motivation of students that can make a difference to their opportunities in the employment market. The programmes are designed to transmit the skills that industry and employers require.

Q: What kind of things do you think employers require?

I think sometimes, employers what they are looking for in young people sometimes is . . . the qualifications play a distant last but they want young people who feel good about themselves, motivated reliable and all these sorts of things and we thought why don't we focus on changing the attitudes in the first instance and once the attitudes are fine then the qualifications are the things that are not so important as they feel good about themselves. More coming from a focus of employment, changing the attitudes, being more responsible
for themselves and reliability and you get them those sorts of things.

(Job Placement Officer, Interview 13/05/99)

The acquisition of skill in academy programmes has shifted away from the specific applicable job skills of traditional vocational training towards recognition of generic, transferable, skills as being essential to successful employment. The students are not becoming 'experts' in a particular aspect of industry as the skills they are learning are typically more general, so they can, therefore, be transferable between different jobs and employment opportunities. The data suggests that by teaching the students skills such as time management, problem solving, team skills and the 'right' attitude they will become more rounded workers and more successful in the labour market. As detailed by the Employment Service in Chapter Two, these are the kinds of skills employers look for ahead of specific skill attributes.

Q: What kinds of things are the students learning?

Well, they do the obvious like learn to use word-processing packages, spreadsheets and so on but we are really careful not to limit them. We teach them skills that are general so they can adapt to any work situation. I mean they need to know how to type and use a photocopier and switchboard but they also need to be able to learn the system of the company they will work in. That is why we teach general skills also.

(Director - Office academy, Interview 11/06/99)

Well as I said there are three or four of them in the course that are interested in the armed services and the services, especially the army have said that this is the sort of stuff that they want the kids to have when they come along. They want them to be confident and have problem solving skills and some of these outdoor pursuits. So that is what we do.

(Director - Outdoors Academy, Interview 14/06/99)
We are doing some unit standards but they are not about food, so they are more about communication and working as a team, all of those sort of ones that are relatively easy for us to get hold of and assess.

(Director - Hospitality and Tourism Academy, Interview 11/06/99)

All students indicated that the skills they were learning will be of benefit to them when they move into the workforce but, more importantly, they also enjoy learning these types of skills as indicated by an Outdoors academy student.

Q: What are some of the good things about being on the programme?

Everyone works as a team, I mean when you go into a job you don't necessarily work as an individual, you know you have got to work as a team and I think it is a good quality that we have learnt.

(Outdoors Academy Student, FG 12/08/99)

The importance of students learning skills that can be used in multiple work situations is paramount, as in the contemporary job market these students can expect to have more than one career in their lifetime. Their skills must therefore, be applicable in different situations.

Q: Are the skills transferable?

Yes. I think so. I mean at the moment the unit is certainly very much childcare orientated but that is only one aspect of the course. You see we do personal and professional skills as units and it is just a whole raft of you know presentation, communication all those sorts of things that you can do right across the board. The skills there can be generalisable.

(Director - Nanny Academy, Interview 11/06/99)
So the skills can be transferred across. But at the same time because they do “Skills” I am actually keeping their options open. So we don’t just look at a narrow range but we look at a wide range of what skills and qualities they have got that they can take across to other jobs. And also make them aware that most people in this day and age change their careers at least every ten years. I think they are learning lots of things that are not very measurable, you know their socialisation improves a lot.

(Careers advisor, Interview 11/06/99)

The Competency Approach to Assessment

As unit standards involve reaching a level of competency students are assessed on their ability to reach the standard required. The assessment is generally practical in nature and allows students who may not have been successful in a written exam situation to have more of an opportunity to pass each unit.

Competency based education

The findings from the questionnaire showed a strong preference from the students for a hands-on approach to their schoolwork. Eighty-five percent of the students indicated that the practical nature of the courses were what they enjoyed the most. Examples of questionnaire responses were:

Q: What do you enjoy about the academy?

The knowledge you gain from practical and theory work (greater understanding).

(Outdoors Academy student)
Its a lot more hands on than normal school work.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student)

It's interesting, exciting, practical, fun and educational and I feel I'm learning a lot from it in a way that I can't get bored or feel that I'm wasting my time in this area.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student)

The practical work we do and the skills we learn.

(Office Academy student)

Sitting unit standards also catered for individual needs more appropriately by allowing work to be completed at their own speed and level. This has removed pressure from students who may not have been up to the same speed as other classmates or for those who may have picked up tasks quicker than others have. It also provides an individual style of learning that is based on the student’s own motivation, a skill that employers have indicated as important for employment prospects. Most students had a similar response to the question of unit standards and a representative few from focus group discussions are detailed below;

Q: What is good about unit standards?

You can do things at your own speed as long as you get it in by the deadline.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 1, FG 11/08/99)

Like if you wanna do it, you do. If you don’t wanna, you don’t do it.

(Outdoors Academy student, FG 12/08/99)
They leave it up to you to do at your own speed which is sometimes good, cause you can finish an interesting unit quickly but it is harder with a boring one.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 2, FG 11/08/99)

Unit standards

The students interviewed felt that unit standards are more straightforward. There is no hidden meaning or context and at the start of the unit the students can see the amount of work they have to accomplish. These are examples of the responses from most students;

Q: How do you find doing unit standards instead of exams?

It's good because it is so clear. This is what you need to do and this is how you do it and you just do it.

(Nanny Academy student, FG 16/08/99)

I think it is the fact that we do most of the stuff in class. I mean it is unit standards where you just have to get the answers right and you can do away with homework and stuff.

(Hospitality and Tourism student, FG 11/08/99)

Another positive point indicated by students is the opportunity to complete the task again. Competency based assessment assesses the practical skills of a task and if the student cannot successfully complete the task they have the opportunity to try again.

You don't have a big exam at the end of the year and you go through 6th form and you have assessments during the year but at least with this you have another chance.

(Office Academy student, FG 17/08/99)
Yeah it is pretty easy; it is just getting the exact wording that is the hard part. But then you can do a resit.

(Hospitality and Tourism student, FG 11/08/99)

Unit standards, however, are not without fault. A criticism of the 'step by step' approach is that it can result in a systematic scientific approach to learning that forecloses on creativity.

Q: Are there any problems with taking on something new like unit standards?

The biggest challenge for me at the moment is to make them more independent and I must say that the Polytech units, to me, are a bit dreary. You know they are just presented in a way that is just a black and white page there are no illustrations, just ticking boxes to fill in. It doesn't appeal to any of them. I mean you could even structure these things in a way that there is an incentive to move on to the next thing. But that is all right.

(Director- Nanny Academy, Interview 11/06/99)

The last unit we did. I think it was a diabolical unit anyway. It started out, well we had to plan the course before we got all the course material from the agencies and ITO and had planned, well, this is the way we are going to do it. Took one look at the book when it arrived and Oh God. It was pretty bad, but we stuck with the plan and that history stuff. I don't know if I would even bother covering it again. For the students, it was boring and it's not the right direction anyway. It won't get them a job.

(Director – Hospitality and Tourism Academy, Interview 11/06/99)

The teachers, however, do make an effort to liven up the sessions and stimulate student interest even in units that may seem 'boring'.
The Emergent Story

My primary concern in the first part of this chapter has been to illuminate the organisational aspects of the academy programmes from the position of the teachers/directors and administrators. The story told by the teachers/directors indicates that academy programmes are designed around industry requirements. Malbec High School has identified what industry require from school leavers in order to gain employment, and have incorporated this into the design of their programmes. Industry has a direct involvement with both programme and curriculum design and impart their values and attitudes through the Employment Skills Programme that all academy students complete.

The teachers/directors and administrators story also suggests that Malbec High School has adopted a redefined approach to the transmission of skill that places emphasis on the teaching of transferable and generic skills to academy students in order to more appropriately meet the needs of industry.

This story has also shown how academy programmes have embraced unit standards and the use of a competency based approach to learning in an attempt to make the qualifications more relevant and accessible to non-academic students, whilst still meeting industry requirements.

The Students' Stories

Students' responses were collected from focus group discussions with eighteen students from academy groups. The students' responses were
not predictable in the same way that the teachers/directors and administrators had been. Focus group questions were open ended and were directed by the students' responses, not through any predetermined set of questions. The findings in this section are mostly based on student responses during focus group discussions, however, the fifty-three questionnaire responses have also been included wherever possible and have been used to construct the subsequent graphs.

The students' story is divided into three parts in which I will firstly present a profile of the typical academy student that will illuminate how most academy students are typically in their final year of schooling. Most academy students have little or no formal school qualifications and have previously 'switched off' to academic subjects. In this story, however, I will illuminate how involvement in academy programmes has caused a significant shift in academy students' attitudes to both school and learning. This is evidenced, firstly, by a transformation in student attitudes and perceptions of school and learning and secondly by an alteration in the students' intended career destinations upon leaving school.

In the final part of this section I draw on findings from focus group interviews to suggest that students use academy programmes as a transition from school to the workplace as the courses provide relevant skills and experience for future occupational roles. Academy students choose academy courses that are linked to their career aspirations and intended destinations. Secondly, academy students select optional mainstream subjects that complement their academy programme. Thirdly, academy students are
increasingly involved in part time employment that is linked to their academy subject.

Profile of the Academy Students

A profile of the ‘typical’ academy student can be arrived by comparing the year group of academy students, their level of formal school qualifications, and the students’ attitudes to mainstream schooling.

Participation by year group

Academy programmes are a popular choice among senior school students as an alternative choice to mainstream subjects. Findings from the questionnaire highlighted that over a third of students (36 percent) at senior school level (years 12-14) were enrolled in academy programmes in 1999 (see Figure 1).
There was significant involvement in academy programmes for students in their final year of formal schooling: Year 14 (57 percent) and Year 13 (42 percent). Findings from the questionnaire suggest that students become increasingly aware of and place more importance upon their anticipated departure from school and entry into the wider community particularly as it related to future employment. For a significant and growing proportion of students the academy programmes are seen as a more relevant and potentially useful transition to their future positions in the work force. Pre-vocational courses such as academy programmes, with their more hands-on approach are seen as a bridge from the academic world of school to the practicalities of the workplace. This is evidenced by an increasing proportion
of students opting for academy programmes as they progress through their schooling.

The questionnaire also showed that there are significantly more students in Year 14 (57 percent) attending academy programmes than students in Year 12 (29 percent). Although academy participation appears to be motivated by an increasing anticipation of entry into the workforce, Year 12 students do not necessarily see enrolment in a year long academy programme as a final transition year between school and work. Seventy five percent of Year 12 students felt that they would return and do a different academy programme the following year. In doing so, Year 12 students retain the opportunity of enrolling in subjects missed at either School Certificate or Sixth Form Certificate levels.

**Student qualifications**

Academy programmes consistently appealed to students with little or no formal school qualifications (see Figure 2). These students had returned to school in an attempt to increase their marketability in the labour market by gaining alternative qualifications and skills.
Of those enrolled in the academy programmes, sixty-eight percent of students had no qualifications or qualifications no higher than School Certificate. Those students who had achieved School Certificate had, however, generally had passed no more than four subjects (see Table 2).

Table 2: School qualifications and numbers of subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School certificate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form Certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although several students had attained a small number of unit standards as yet these were the only qualifications that they had attained. As a group, these students had been less successful in attaining formal academic
qualifications, and consequently were attracted to the skills-based approach offered by the academy programmes.

'Switched off' to an academic programme

Academy students showed a lack of interest in mainstream academic subjects as they were 'boring' due to the lack of relevance to their future employment. Most students felt that this lack of interest had impeded their achievement more so than a lack of ability.

In the focus group with the Outdoor academy students I asked students specifically about the relevance of their choice of other subjects as many of these students continually made reference to the fact that they did not enjoy their mainstream subjects.

Q: Do you find your other subjects relevant to . . . ?

I suppose it is just like everything. I mean, if you like something then you know you concentrate and then you know you really try harder rather than something you don’t really like but you have to do. You just totally switch off. The outdoors yeah. I wanna achieve; I wanna gets the qualities out of it.

(Outdoors Academy student, FG 12/08/99)

Many academy students have, therefore, 'switched off to a traditional academic curriculum, as they found it difficult to contextualise academic subjects in relation to future employment. The following examples from the Outdoor academy illustrate the perceived connection between education and employment.
Q: So why are you doing the academy?

I didn't really excel at academic kinds of courses... subjects.

Q: Why do you think that was?

They were boring. This was a chance to try different things you could actually do at school. It's good doing something practical.

(Outdoor Academy student 1, FG 12/08/99)

Yeah I know what he means. I mean I never excelled at school. You know I am always into my sport and I love the outdoors and I could never get a job in an office and sit at a computer. I mean I couldn't do it. Then the outdoor academy came along and I thought I would take that because it is going out and doing different things rather than sitting in a classroom. So it gives me a chance. I think it is pretty good, it is awesome eh?

(Outdoors Academy student 2, FG 12/08/99)

Nearly all the students in other academies programmes felt that mainstream academic subjects had little relevance to their career/job aspirations and claimed that several tasks were vague and had no resemblance to the workplace. As one Automotive trainee explained, with reference to the activities in his general science class:

Its better than the other subjects and other things you are doing like science. I mean it's dumb. How are you going to use making hokey pokey to be a mechanic?

(Automotive Academy student, FG 19/08/99)

Students felt so strongly, in fact, about the relevance of academy programmes to their career aspirations that the resultant increase in employment opportunities was continually cited as the main reason for attendance. The
programmes are seen by the students as enhancing their opportunities and ability to compete in the labour market. Academy programmes, therefore, are an effective learning aid for students who have not achieved academically due to the relevance and relationship of course content and teaching practices to the workplace. One Office academy student summarised the responses of all academy students by the following example:

Q: So why are you guys doing the academy, what do you want to get out of it?

Get a job!

Q: So you think that it is going to help you get a job?

Yeah. If not we will start kicking and screaming cause that is what it is supposed to be for.

Q: How do you think it is going to help you?

Because we have got work experience and everything we do you can use, that's what we will be doing.

(Office Academy student, FG 17/08/99)

The careers advisor supported the students in saying it was essential for the programmes to identify with the requirements of the labour market to appropriately skill students in order to enhance employment prospects.

Q: But why design the courses to suit industry needs?

How else are the students going to get jobs? You have to match the product to the market. If these courses do not get these students jobs then we are doing something wrong.

(Careers advisor, Interview 11/06/99)
In summary, the typical academy student is in their final year of schooling (generally Year 13), and has little or no formal school qualifications as a result of having 'switched' off to academic programmes. Consequently, the academy student therefore seeks training that will be relevant to the workplace and provide greater opportunities for employment in the changing labour market. Academy programmes provide a relevant programme of training in order to increase the skills and qualifications of students but more importantly positively transforms the students' attitudes to schooling and learning.

The Influence of Academy Programmes on Attitudes to School and Learning

Academy programmes reposition the attitudes academy students by communicating a more favourable approach to schooling and learning. As a consequence there was a dramatic shift in academy students career aspirations and intentions for the year following the academy programme.

Perceptions of school

The questionnaire directed students to express their feelings towards school based on a 7-point scale with 1 indicating that school was really worthwhile to them, 4 being 'OK', and 7 being a waste of time. Fifty seven percent of students indicated that their feelings towards school had improved since being in the academy programmes while twenty eight percent stated that no change had occurred. It is worthy of note that only six percent of
students felt their attitude to school had declined while on the academy programmes.

Involvement in academy programmes is evidently responsible for a noticeable shift in the students' perceptions and attitudes towards school. The students' perception of school indicated a positive orientation as a result of their participation in academy programmes, as indicated in Figure 3 by a shift of the curve to the right.

Figure 3: Student feelings towards school
In addition students were asked to comment on whether the academy programmes had been directly responsible for this shift in attitude towards learning and school. Figure 4 suggests that participation in academy programmes for only six months has a profound effect upon the attitudes of students to learning in general.

Figure 4: Students’ attitudes to learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student perceptions</th>
<th>11%</th>
<th>41%</th>
<th>39%</th>
<th>4%</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A large majority of students felt the academy programmes had been instrumental in creating a more positive approach to schooling and learning, however, a small number of students felt their attitude had worsened by such involvement.
The modification of the traditional teacher/student relationship is one way in which academy programmes have transformed student attitudes to learning. Students in focus groups suggested that previous teachers had used a different or more formal teaching approach that was not beneficial to their learning.

Q: So is she teaching you differently to other teachers?

Yeah well, like my English teacher you ask her questions and she'll think it is someone else. She just won't talk to you. She'll talk to someone else.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 1, FG 11/08/99)

And our maths teacher, he's... Well you'll ask him a question and he'll tell you it but he won't explain it properly. Not in the way Miss Smith does.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 2, FG 11/08/99)

Academy students feel more 'at ease' with their academy teachers/directors and speak about them in an enthusiastic manner.

All academy teachers/directors have had considerable industry experience and use this in their teaching in order to have a closer working relationship with students to provide a more 'hands-on' approach to completion of tasks.

Q: What do you think of the academy teachers?

She'll actually sit down and talk to you. She is one of those teachers that you are not afraid to ask questions and stuff.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 1, FG 11/08/99)
She is hands on with you like with stuff shows you how to do it and tells you how to do it and she'll say if you are not doing it right and she'll show you.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 2, FG 11/08/99)

He makes sure we understand it. I reckon, oh I don't know what it is but I reckon, I dunno. I reckon I can just understand him more than any other teacher.

(Outdoors Academy student 1, FG 12/08/99)

I think it is good because he wants to be there as well. I mean some teachers come in and they teach you and they don’t seem like they want to be there and he is in with us and talking with us and stuff.

(Outdoors Academy student 2, FG 12/08/99)

Future intentions

With the exception of two students who changed school with the specific intention of enrolling in the academy programmes, all students who participated in the questionnaire had been attending Malbec High School full-time in the year prior. Nevertheless, nearly half of all students on academy programmes would not have returned to school had academy programmes not been offered (see Figure 5).
It is important to note that when these figures are broken down by academy options there is a marked difference in course attractiveness as an alternative to leaving school. Academies such as Outdoor Education, Nanny and Automotive had a greater appeal to students as the sole reason for remaining in school. The most notable of these was the Outdoor Academy where seventy-seven percent of students would not have returned to school if the academy had not been offered.

Conversely, a high number of academy students who elected the Office Practice (66.6 percent) and Hospitality and Tourism (60 percent) academies would have returned to school regardless of the academy being available.
This may, in part, be due to the close link between these programmes and their being offered in a similar form within the mainstream curriculum.

Aside from drawing students back into school, academy programmes also have made an impact on the career aspirations and intended destinations of students (See Figure 6). There was a noticeable shift away from students returning to school, although this can be explained by the age of students.

FIGURE 6: Academy students’ intended career destinations
What is most significant, however, is the inclusion of several new career choices such as travelling overseas, doing other academies and a desire to attend teachers training college and university. For most, further post-compulsory vocational training became both relevant and desirable.

Academies as Transitional Programmes

As previously outlined, students typically view academy programmes as a final year of schooling that provides a transition from school to the workplace. This is further evidenced by the relevance and relationship of academy programmes to desired employment destinations.

Study/work links

The questionnaire prompted students to indicate what they enjoyed most about their academy as well what tasks they found to be of most importance in their transition to the workplace. Students answered these questions with direct reference to their particular academy programme and therefore this section has been divided into academy groups to reflect that.

Outdoors Academy

The most enjoyable part of the Outdoor academy students was described by the students as ‘going out on camps’. While on camp students attempt to gain skills in team building, leadership and show significant boosts in confidence. Students also indicated that the ‘thrill’ of trying new
things and pushing themselves past their own barriers made the course rewarding and exciting. These students all feel a bit 'cramped up' in a classroom and enjoy the time they have to spend in the outdoors. Examples from the students' comments are:

- There are lots of 'adventures' and a lot of thrill and team building.
- The activity that we did and how we learnt the skills of the activity that we did.
- You are not cramped up in a class all the time. We get out doing things in the environment which I love.
- The trips and experiences you have on the trips.
- It is a lot more hands on than normal school work.

The most important things that students felt they had learnt whilst in the academy were first aid, leadership and outdoor survival. One student commented that they were learning to communicate with different types of people. Examples of important aspects of the programme are:

- Personal confidence, leadership and teamwork.
- The survival routines and the experience in the army and most of all learning about myself.
- More practical skills. How to communicate with the other people in my class who before I would not have been friends with.

**Hospitality and Tourism Academy**

Students in the Hospitality and Tourism academy indicated that the practical nature of the academy was also the most enjoyable aspect of their academy programme. Learning to cook alongside the acquisition of new skills and knowledge was seen as instrumental in their enjoyment of the
programme. The fact that the students did not have to sit 'long' exams to gain qualifications was cited as an added bonus.

- Cooking practicals, skills and knowledge
- It's interesting, exciting, educational and fun and I feel I'm learning a lot from it in a way that I can't get bored or feel that I'm wasting my time in this area.
- There are no really long hard exams and it is fun.
- The practical work we do and the skills we learn

Students found the most important things they had learnt while on the programme were specifically related to skills that would be required in industry. Several examples of these are:

- All of us working as a team.
- About use of knives. Correct/different ways of cooking probably the most important is the theory as it helps you understand what you need to be doing.
- The things about food and some things to do with tourism
- All the different jobs and what they are

**Office Academy**

The office academy students also enjoyed the practical aspect of their classes and felt that the close relationship of academy programmes to 'real life' work situations was essential in the facilitation of their learning.

- Learn about stuff that you wouldn't in any other class
- Not a lot of pressure on us about work
- It got me a part-time job, also doing different unit standards work
- Going on the Internet and learning computer stuff
- Frequency of classes, able to work at own pace and not try to rush through things
skills before moving into the labour market will assist in their transition from school to the workplace.

- How to use Internet
- Computer work
- How to use a switchboard. I learnt that when I was on work experience and how to use a photocopier.
- How to type invoices etc. to type a bit faster

**Nanny Academy**

Students on the Nanny academy clearly linked their enjoyment of academy programmes to the importance and relevance of training to the workplace. These students felt that the practical experience was important in preparing for the school-to-work transition and also indicated that enjoyment of the course was based around learning these essential skills. Examples of what Nanny academy students find important are:

- Work with little children
- How to look after a child and what to do if they get sick
- Things I needed to know about kids that I didn’t know before
- Going out and working with little children and making toys
- Looking after little kids and babies
- It gives me a chance to interact with kids and to learn everything that I need and want to know about kids to further my career

**Automotive Academy**

The automotive academy students felt that learning about motors had helped them enjoy the course as they could see the relevance and connection to the workplace. These students, however, felt that at times there was not enough attention paid to learning practical skills in a holistic manner. For
to the workplace. These students, however, felt that at times there was not enough attention paid to learning practical skills in a holistic manner. For example, one student felt that learning how the internals of a gearbox operated in isolation to the rest of the engine did not fully prepare them for the realities of the workplace. Nevertheless, most automotive students found that they enjoyed learning when they thought it was important for their future careers. Some examples of important and enjoyable aspects of academy programmes are:

- Hands on experience with motors
- Learning about motors
- Working on engines
- Getting some qualifications
- What to expect as an automotive engineer
- How an engine works and how hard work pays off

Subject Choice

Vocational academy programmes are part time courses of study. In order for an academy student to be considered fulltime they are required to choose additional subjects from the mainstream curriculum. While few students choose core sixth form subjects such as English and maths, most choose subjects that are complementary to their academy programme. Academy students intentionally choose vocationally based mainstream subjects as they were of more relevance to the students career aspirations. Examples of this were an Automotive student taking workshop technology and skills pathway as mainstream subjects and a office practice student taking Information Technology and word processing next to their academy option. All
students taking the outdoor academy were also taking Physical Education classes at various levels with some completing the minimum compulsory requirements of English and maths as well. Some of these students, though, indicated that although they took subjects that were closely related to their academy work, these subjects were merely 'fillers' that completed a fulltime course at school, so that they could concentrate on their academy work.

Like I said before, the other subjects I am just doing for the hell of it to fill in a subject. I mean I could concentrate on the academy instead of that other crap.

(Outdoor Academy student 1, FG 12/08/99)

I only wanted to come back to school to do PE and Outdoor academy but, well, we couldn’t have study periods and I just had to fill in so I put all this other stuff in, easy subjects.

(Outdoor Academy student 2, FG 12/08/99)

It is often the case that academy students will elect subjects that are closely linked and beneficial to their academy work. The school also encourages academy students to select an option that will complement their academy programme, thus making a complete programme with the academy class as a focal point.

Q: Do students choose other subjects that support their academy subject?

Yeah. Their dean has a word with us and it really comes down to their choices. A lot of their courses do compliment.

(Director - Automotive academy, Interview 14/06/99)
The Careers advisor was resolute in saying that academy courses should be combined with complementary mainstream subjects in order to create a complete vocational programme.

I think so. I really do and if you talk to other staff they will definitely confirm that. I think what has happened is that it has given the students a focus as to why they are at school. And for all their other subjects that they are doing are focussed onto their academy work. They are not separate subjects any more. They are all part and parcel of obtaining one goal towards the end of the year.

(Careers Advisor, Interview 11/06/99)

The students' choice of both alternative subjects and the academy course is not part of a random selection process. Vocational courses hold meaning for the 'typical' academy students relative to the relationship between learning and the workplace. This is beneficial to the students' learning, however, a tension is created that divides vocational and academic education as the student has effectively 'opted out' of the mainstream system in a method that is legitimated by the school.

**Employment Opportunities**

Academy programmes do, however, increase the employment opportunities of students. Most students choose academy programmes that are linked to their career aspirations. In addition many students also support the transition to the workplace through part time employment whilst in academy programmes.
Part time employment

There was a dramatic increase in the number of academy students involved in part time employment following enrolment in an academy programme (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8: Students involved in part time employment

This increase suggests that academy programmes may assist students in gaining part time employment. In the year before participating in the academy programme only nine percent of students were actively employed in part time work. Since enrolling in the academy programmes fifty-one percent of students became involved in part time employment at the time the survey was completed.

This finding may be representative of the students’ age and the willingness of senior students to seek employment, although two students
did indicate that due to the reduced homework level required for academy programmes they had more time to participate in part time employment. Most students claim to accept part time employment based on the certain financial gain, however, nearly a third of academy students employed part time indicated that the close relationship of their work to their academy option meant that they could 'try out' new skills within the context of the workplace. Of the students who indicated they were employed part-time six of those in the Hospitality and Tourism academy have jobs related to the Hospitality industry and three of those on the Office Practice academy have jobs in offices or small business and performed tasks related to their academy subject.

Future career choices

As well as a strong link between part-time employment and students' academy options, there was also a noticeably strong connection between the choice of academy and career prospects. The questionnaire findings indicated that initially ninety percent of academy students aspired to careers that had strong practical links with their academy programme (see Figure 9). Examples of this were outdoor academy students whose career aspirations involved outdoor pursuits such as adventure tourism and guiding, as well as a number who wanted to pursue careers in related fields with the army, police force or airforce. Students involved in the Hospitality and Tourism academy mostly indicated that their ideal career would be to work in either the Tourism or Hospitality industry although many of students did not cite specific occupations within industry categories.
FIGURE 9: Link between academy programme and ideal employment

In general, academy students felt that choosing an academy that would assist them in gaining their 'ideal' employment aspirations was essential, however, a small group of students felt a dissonance with their desired career choice and the training provided in their academy programme. These students had, however, indicated job/careers that were not related to the academy. It is uncertain whether the employment aspirations of all academy students developed since the student has attended an academy programme or whether the student took the academy as a specific link to their ideal employment. There is some evidence to suggest that the programmes had focused students on particular jobs through providing them with the practical work experience related to that position of employment.

Q: Why are you doing this particular academy programme?

I am doing it because I want to get into the Navy and be a chef and they said well what has your school got and I said 'well we've got this academy coming up' and they said 'make sure you get into it'. I mean that is what the Navy said they wanted.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 1, FG 11/08/99)
I took this course because I mainly wanted to get into Hospitality and Tourism, as it is something to fall back on when you are older.

(Hospitality and Tourism Academy student 2, FG 11/08/99)

Academy directors also indicated during interviews that students seek to gain skills and qualifications in order to apply for positions within the industry they were studying towards. A response from the director of the Automotive academy indicates this:

Q: Are the students taking the academies to get jobs in that industry?

Most of them are looking in that career direction, sure and what’s wrong with that. You know there are places for people in society, whether it be digging a trench or whether it be as an accountant and so on.

(Director - Automotive Academy, Interview 14/06/99)

Experience is seen as one of the key links to future employment and academy programmes provide students with a grounding in their choice of industry in addition to providing realistic expectations and qualifications towards their chosen career. Several students felt that this was a positive aspect of the programmes because it gave them confidence to seek employment as they now had some, albeit limited, knowledge and practical skills. This is evidenced by the dramatic increase of students involved in part-time employment, as detailed earlier.
The Emergent Story

My primary aim in this part of the chapter was to illuminate the experiences of the students participating in academy programmes. The stories provided from academy students suggest that a general profile of the ‘typical’ academy student can be recognised as a student in their final year of schooling (generally Year 13), who has little or no formal school qualifications as a result of having ‘switched’ off to academic programmes.

The findings also suggest that academy programmes serve as a means of developing greater motivation and a more positive attitude towards school and learning. The reformation of these attitudes influences students’ future intentions for employment and training.

This story also suggests that involvement in academy programmes has increased the acceptance of industry values and attitudes by the significant increase in students involved in part-time employment. In addition, the students’ stories have suggested that academy programmes are viewed as a direct transition between schooling and the workplace as evidenced by the students choice of academy programme and their ‘ideal’ career.

In the following chapter I will draw on the findings presented by the teachers/directors and administrators stories and the students’ stories to examine academy programmes through the new vocationalism. I will argue that contemporary interpretations of training provided by new vocational literature can explain the various organisational aspects of academy programmes however, these
interpretations are not wholly sufficient for addressing student experiences. I will introduce an alternative approach that interprets programmes modelled on the new vocational training paradigm as providing skills and attitudes to empower workers to move beyond the lower level limitations of the labour market.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{ Any comments given by teachers/directors, administrators and students are presented in this chapter as verbatim.}\]
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

Two emergent stories developed from the findings presented in Chapter Five. The first was the story told by teachers/directors and administrators and concentrated on the organisational aspects of academy programmes and how these shaped student learning. The second story was told by the students and detailed how the students actually experienced academy programmes and learning. I have divided this chapter along the same lines. There are two stories presented here that provide insight into the experiences of teachers and students involved in academy programmes.

The first story presents findings from the teachers/directors and administrators that highlight four major themes transmitted through the design of academy programmes. Firstly, academy programmes have strong links with industry and place emphasis on industry involvement in curricula and programme design. Secondly, academy programmes have adopted an industry directed discourse of skill that is based on generic, transferable skills acquisition and development. Thirdly, this discourse of skill is taught through a competency based structure that atomises units of skill rather than a progressive, holistic approach to learning used by craft based vocational courses. The fourth theme that emerged showed that this way of organising teaching and learning, as used by academy programmes, offers working class youth greater opportunities for employment and mobility although this movement is limited to within the confines of the bottom end of the labour market (Finn, 1984; Gaskell, 1991). The argument presented by these
findings closely links the organisation of academy programmes to the new vocationalism (Cohen, 1984; Bates, 1984).

The second story presented in this chapter emerged from the findings included in the students' story in Chapter Five. The students' story shows that although the new vocationalism can be used to understand the structure and organisation of academy programmes, the new vocational literature does not provide a way to illuminate the changes in individual students' perception and attitudes towards schooling and employment. My study shows that the academy experience positively repositions students attitudes to schooling as a direct and transitional link to the workplace. This places my research between two distinct approaches to the transition to the workplace: the psychological approach emphasising the significance of individual choice in work and the sociological which stresses transition as part of the process of capitalist allocation to the labour market.

Various anomalies emerged that contradict the new vocational interpretation of academy programmes. While my findings show a significant increase in involvement of academy students in part time employment while engaged in the academy programmes, this involvement cannot be explained by the new vocationalism. Conventional explanations for increased part time employment such as less homework, the age of the students, and the tendency for senior students to seek employment experience, do not illuminate the significance of part time employment for academy students. My findings show that academy students' increasing involvement in part time employment is analogous to homework. Part time employment is repositioned as an extension of their academy training and allows students to experience the workplace and 'try out' and either accept or reject what they
are learning in the classroom (Finn, 1984). Secondly, involvement in academy programmes has resulted in some academy students changing their intended future career destinations. Significantly some of these destinations fall outside traditional working class notions of career choice thereby refuting the theory that class impacts on occupational choices. Consequently the new vocationalism cannot provide satisfactory explanations for changes in the motivation of students such as Sarah, whose story introduced this thesis. In the second section of this chapter I will discuss these anomalies and how they imply directions for further research.

**The Teachers/Directors and Administrators Story**

The story that emerged from the findings from the teachers/directors and administrators portrayed an organisational structure of academy programmes that emulates the vocational reform process in Britain and Canada (Cohen, 1984; Finn, 1984; Gaskell, 1986; 1991). This reform process has come to be understood as a new type of vocational training that takes its lead from industry and government needs. The data provided from the interviews with teachers/directors and administrators, along with supporting evidence from students, shows that academy programmes have generally adopted a framework of training that is consistent with the new vocationalism (Cohen, 1984). Therefore, the new vocationalism provides us with a way to understand how academy programmes represent a vocational training that differs from previous historical models.
Academy Programmes and the New Vocationalism

My study of academy programmes, by way of a new vocational approach, has strong implications for understanding the training and education of working class youth and their transition from school to the workplace. The new vocational literature provides two distinctly different interpretations of the meaning behind the reformation of training and education. I will suggest that there is also a third interpretation or approach that can be applied to the new forms of vocational training.

The first interpretation is divided into two parts that present different facets of a corresponding viewpoint. This argues that the forms of vocational education that have emerged since the 1970s have created a more relevant and practical curriculum that has interpreted the interests and approaches of working class youth to education and employment (Broadfoot, 1986; Avis, 1991; Simon, Dippo & Schenke, 1991; Kincheloe, 1995). Linked to a progressive liberal pedagogy of education inspired by Dewey (1916) this approach relies on interpreting working class interests in such a way that student motivation and commitment to learning is both encouraged and sustained. My study of academy programmes shows that the use of competency based education and assessment is seen to be more responsive in interpreting the approaches of academy students to employment and consequently provides them with greater opportunities to gain the skills and attitudes required for the workplace and employment. Sarah’s Story provides an exemplar of the way a progressive pedagogy can have a positive influence on academy students’ motivation and learning.
Nevertheless, this interpretation perpetuates the instrumental function of schooling as meeting the requirements of a capitalist society. This way of understanding the new vocationalism assumes that students are directed towards different areas of the labour market according to the requirements of industry (Gaskell, 1991; Avis; 1991). Academy programmes can be understood through this interpretation as they provide education and training that is closely linked to the employment opportunities available to working class youth and taught in a manner consistent with workplace training. The division of students along class occupational lines, however, directs and restricts working class students to the lower end of the labour market (Hollands, 1991).

A far more direct albeit less cogent approach to the relationship of education to industry aligns aspects of the reformation of vocational training with Neo-Marxist theoretical arguments (Goldstein, 1984; Hollands, 1991). It is claimed that the new training paradigm has ‘castigated training schemes and vocationalism as a Conservative-led conspiratorial attack on the working class’ by allowing capitalist industry’s needs to insert training within the schooling system (Hollands, 1991, 169). Interpreting academy programmes within this debate is difficult as my findings highlight that students, far from feeling oppressed and set upon by an industry led conspiracy, in fact readily embrace many of the opportunities that these programmes make available to them. This theoretical approach is not wholly sufficient with regard to certain facets of the academy programmes as my study also shows that the model of skills training adopted by academy programmes does not restrict all academy students to the bottom end of the labour market. Findings from the students story indicate that academy programmes do not in fact restrict all working
class students to the lower end of the labour market as twenty percent of academy students showed an inclination for career paths that can not be explained through either the new vocationalism nor class understandings of career choice. This finding will be taken up in the second part of this chapter.

The second interpretation introduced by Cohen (1984; 1997), argues that the agenda of the new vocationalism is primarily and fundamentally about the "... inculcation of social discipline ..." (Cohen, 1984, 105). This understanding foregrounds the change in worker attitudes as essential to meet the needs of the new economy. Although ostensibly about giving certain groups the skills required by industry, Cohen (1984; 1997) argues that the principle outcome of new vocational training is a change in attitude that is more compatible with changing labour demands driven by rapid changes in technology. Empowerment of students is encouraged by providing them with the right attitude to be adaptable to the changing needs of the labour market. There is, however, a tendency for the transmission of an 'industry disposition' to discipline a new workforce into a subservient role directed by industry and employers in accordance with labour market requirements.

Although this approach is more useful in looking at academy programmes because it recognises that changes in attitude and motivation are central to the success of industry led training, its emphasis on attitudinal change does not sit comfortably with the rationale behind academy programmes. My study shows that whilst many of the students in academy programmes underwent a fundamental shift in their view of work (as evidenced by their increasing interest in skills training and part-time employment), the primary focus of the academy programmes was the acquisition of skills. While academy programmes accept and in fact plan their
curriculum around students having poor attitudes my findings show that changing those attitudes is secondary to furnishing them with skills. In this respect it is possible to agree with Cohen (1984; 1997) that attitudinal change and skill transformation are inherently linked. The empowerment of students and workers through skilling, as Cohen (1984; 1997) argues, simply becomes a subjective repositioning of the worker’s relationship to the workplace and does not represent any useable forms of authority in the labour market for the student. My study of academy programmes, however, shows that the transmission of an ‘industry disposition’ may work in opposition to employers needs as twenty percent of academy students were empowered to think beyond or outside the ‘working class’ boundaries of the labour market.

This thesis reveals the necessity of a third interpretation which recognises the need to address several facets of academy programmes that are neither addressed nor readily interpretable by any of the above approaches to new vocationalism. An alternative approach is needed to account for the fact that an increase in the breadth of skills and the transferability of those skills to emergent technologies and employment options empowers a significant number of academy students to move beyond the occupational limitations of the bottom end of the labour market.

As detailed in Chapter Two, the new vocationalism can be understood by identifying three fundamental principles that are used in each approach detailed above. These three principles also emerged from the data presented in the teachers/directors and administrators story which indicates that academy programmes have been organised in a manner consistent with new vocational courses. I will discuss each of these principles with reference to how they shape the experiences of students in academy programmes. Firstly,
I will discuss the proliferation of industry involvement in curriculum reform (Gleeson, 1987; Hickox & Moore, 1990; Jackson, 1994). Secondly, I will address the use of a new discourse of skill (Jackson & Jordan, 1999; Gaskell, 1986; Grubb cited in Lewis, 1998) to mould students attitudes, and values to the model of the 'ideal worker' as exemplified through competency based education (CBE) (Marshall, 1997, Cohen 1984). Thirdly, I will describe the shift in the teaching of vocational skills away from a craft based, occupationally specific approach to prescribed units of competency based skill called unit standards (Harris et al, 1995; Tuck & Peddie, 1995; Broadfoot, 1996; Natale & Joliffe; 1996).

Involvement of industry in academy programmes

Academy programmes meet the needs of industry through programme design and curriculum design. As argued in Chapter Three, in the Academy Story, the organisers of academy programmes felt that the current academic curriculum was not providing students with appropriate skills to leave school and enter the workplace and, therefore, a large number were leaving school without qualifications only to enter into what Deer and Sneddon (1992) coined the 'limbo-land' of unemployment. The school identified that the mainstream curriculum was developing a deficit of skills training (Hickox & Moore, 1990).

Academy programmes attempt to meet the needs of industry and employers by the adoption of a new model of vocational training. The new vocationalism provides one way to understand how and why academy programmes have attempted to meet the needs of employers. Development
of academy programmes is essential in order for schooling and training to meet the needs of the ‘new’ economy in order to successfully employ more school leavers (Hickox & Moore, 1990). Academy programmes have moved vocational education in New Zealand to a position that strives to meet these needs. Industry is directly involved in the design and development of academy programmes in order to reposition vocational training to meet demand need rather than a supply driven focus.

The teacher/directors and administrators story showed that industry’s involvement in academy programmes is based on the use of industry developed unit standards of assessment and by involvement in courses such as the Employment Skills Programme (ESP) that all academy students complete. Based on unit standards, the ESP is a qualification that is designed by industry to ensure that school leavers entering the workforce have the basic levels of literacy, oracy and numeracy that industry require for entry level positions (NZQA, 2000). Industry’s influence over programme design is by the development of the ESP so that industry employers can be assured that all students holding this qualification will have the necessary basic skills for entry to the workforce. Academy students use this qualification as a form of currency in order to move into the labour market.

The qualifications provided by academy programmes are based on the students’ occupational interest in order to provide students with practical skills, as required by industry. Occupational interest is used by academy organisers to divide students into career directed groups that provide a context for learning. The use of interest and the relationship of that interest to skill acquisition provides employers with an effective tool to train future workers.
As argued in Chapter Two, the reorganisation of workplace power has redirected control over skill away from labour to employers (Marshall, 1997). Therefore, the acquisition of skill in academy programmes is organised and directed according to employers' requirements. The academy directors I interviewed in this study stated it was important for the courses to meet the requirements of the new economy in order for academy students to be equipped with the right skills to gain employment (Hickox & Moore, 1990). The way in which academy programmes can determine the right skills was to have close involvement with industry.

The organisers of academy programmes claimed that it was essential for the programmes to provide students with enough of the right skills to gain employment in order to dispel notions that the programmes were a means of controlling and entertaining disinterested students in their last years at school (Moore, 1984). Academy programmes could be misinterpreted in this way as they cater to students who had left school and for those who had previously not been motivated by an academic curriculum. But academy programmes clearly position themselves as a relevant and practical way of providing working class students, who do not fit into the mainstream academic programme, with employable skills and qualifications through interest and desire. The use of profiles to determine students interests and employment prospects and design of courses around those factors clearly identifies academy programmes, not as methods of 'social regulation' but as a unique way of using 'interest and desire' to provide practical, employable skills for these students. Using student interest as a motivational vehicle can enhance and benefit a student's learning and academy programmes optimise this through curriculum design. The use of students' occupational interest
organises academy programmes in such a way that students can experience purposeful learning which increases their motivation.

The power of purposeful learning in individuals lives provides an alternative lens through which to view and understand academy programmes. There is a large and rich body of literature that combines contemporary research and knowledge with antecedent research by Dewey (1913) to provide a theoretical framework through which to view the relationship between interest, motivation and learning (Bruner, 1996; Dewey, 1913; Hidi, 1990; Renninger, Hidi & Krapp, 1992; Malone & Lepper, 1987; McPhail, Pierson, Freeman, Goodman & Ayappa, in press; Rathunde, 1993; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Renninger & Wozniak, 1985; Schiefele, 1991; Tobias, 1995). This line of inquiry views interest as holistic phenomenon, drawing on contemporary work in metacognition, intersubjectivity, theories of the mind and collaborative learning (McPhail et al, in press). This approach would suggest that the concept of academy programmes designed around student’s ‘genuine interests’ in learning and work would increase purposeful learning. The ability of this line of inquiry to provide a more sufficient explanation for changes in student motivation and enthusiasm rather than the new vocationalism will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Academy programmes and the discourse of skill

Academy programmes have adopted a model of skill that is consistent with the training paradigm of the ‘new’ vocationalism (Hayes in Gleeson, 1990; Jackson, 1997; Gaskell, 1986). Skills are transferable and generic and
should not limit students’ careers options by teaching one set of practical, craft based skills such as how to be a car mechanic. Instead students learn a myriad of skills that combine practical work with small amounts of theory. In this way, the skills the students are taught are not always solely related to their academy, or occupational choice but can be used over a range of employment options (Finn, 1984; Cohen, 1984). All students should acquire the same set of generic, transferable skills but through a different occupational context that is linked to their career interests.

Students in academy programmes will acquire skills that would therefore provide endless opportunities and choice within the employment market. Nevertheless these skills are shaped through various political, cultural and behavioural ideologies that direct academy students to certain areas of the labour market (Cohen, 1984, 1997). Academy programmes adopt an employment culture related to discipline, entry level employment and a ‘working class’ ideology that consequently will restrict students to the bottom end of the labour market. (Finn, 1984; Gaskell, 1991). The academy programmes teach skills such as time management and teamwork that indicate that the expectation is that these students will gain entry level positions and perhaps remain in those positions. The students do not learn skills linked to leadership nor management strategies. In fact academy directors claim that learning to be on time will be of more importance to these students than supervisory skills.

This theoretical understanding of skill positions the new discourse of skill used in academy programmes as a way to direct working class youth within the labour market. It is argued by new vocationalists that employers can then demand retraining and skilling according to their needs (Cohen, 1984).
The control of workers is in fact limited in this instance and they no longer can
direct the level of training required to gain entry level in employment (Cohen,
1984). The use of the Employment Skills Programme qualification as currency
within the job market is an example of this. The reality of teaching students
transferable skills means that, as argued by Finn (1984) and Cohen (1984;
1997), they can move around at the bottom end of the labour market. This
movement is limited as control of labour has been repositioned within the
hands of employers and industry. My study of academy programmes shows
that the range of transferable skills acquired by academy students will often
delimit their mobility within the lower end of the labour market but in some
cases ignite an interest in mobility away from traditional working class
employment and restrictions.

Academy students should be restricted in upward occupational mobility
because of the abstract manner in which skill is taught. Cohen (1984) argues
that the redefinition of skill as an abstract commodity form of labour is
essential for the mobility of workers between different employment
opportunities. Students in academy programmes learn theory and practical
work as separate blocks with assessment of theory often limited to simple
regurgitation of content with no understanding being necessary to pass. This
process has implied a separation of theory and practice that is restrictive to
employment opportunities (Marshall, 1997). Academy students may,
therefore, not always have a theoretical understanding of why they are
completing a task even if they can show successful competency of the
practical aspects. Consequently, the majority of academy students may only
be able to choose from entry level positions of employment that allow them to
complete practical tasks that are isolated from theoretical knowledge and understanding.

Entry level industry employment can effectively be trained for by a competency based approach to education that separates theory from skill and appeals to academy students because of its hands on practical nature (Harris et al, 1995). Competency based education (CBE) provides an illustrative example of the way in which the new ‘discourse’ of skill has been adopted for use in academy programmes as a way of providing students with more applicable work related skills. The use of CBE in academy programmes allows students to gain a substantially greater number of transferable and generic skills than previous craft based approaches to training, which effectively allows them greater autonomy and movement between entry level positions in the labour market.

The competency approach to learning

The teachers/directors and administrators story showed that academy programmes can also be understood through a competency based approach to education and learning. Academy programmes use a competency learning to transmit specific, industry defined competencies to students (Natale & Joliffe, 1996; Tuck & Peddie, 1995; Elley, 1995). My study indicates that competency based standards are considered a relevant form of training by students, teachers and industry. The students, in particular, found that the practical approach to learning was more effective as a means of knowledge and skill transmission. The students interviewed strongly expressed that they
preferred completing practical tasks to bookwork and theory and felt that practical tasks provided a more relevant connection to their future career options.

It was argued in Chapter Two that unit standards often pose problems in implementation as they do not cater to the ranges of ability in one classroom (Elley, 1995). My study of academy programmes shows that unit standards instead focus on individual achievement and outcomes rather than comparisons; students identified that they work at their own speed, at a level that best suits their ability. The element of competition is removed as students are no longer compared to each other but assessed on their own level of competence. The removal of peer competition consequently encourages academy students to achieve greater personal results (Broadfoot, 1996; Tuck & Peddie, 1995). Academy students indicated that they preferred CBE over norm-referenced assessment because there were no ‘big exams’ and they could resit whatever they had failed. Elley (1995) and Tuck (1995) claim that the ability to resit competencies takes the pressure away from students to compare success with other students but can also allow them to become complacent about assessment as it is always possible to try again at a later stage. My feeling is that CBE offers a ‘second chance’ to many of these students who had previously been inundated with failure in mainstream schooling. The opportunity to resit removes the stigma of failing and encourages many academy students to try harder in the next assessment.

My approach to academy programmes adopting CBE as a method of teaching and assessment is positioned within the area of debate that identifies the problems with CBE in isolating skill from knowledge (Tuck,
If Tuck's (1995) argument is adopted academy students cannot be assessed in the mastery of a subject through CBE because mastery is the combination of knowledge and conceptual understanding not just practical skill. As I have previously argued academy programmes isolate skill and knowledge and although theory is taught it is done in such a way that students do not develop a contextual understanding. By using CBE academy programmes are restricting the ability of students to move vertically in the labour market as they have no conceptual understanding of what they are doing and therefore will have difficulty applying skills to alternative situations and tasks (Tuck, 1995). Academy students will be able to move about within occupational contexts that require that same level of competency but will experience difficulty in moving into more complex situations. Therefore, academy programmes can be seen to offer greater opportunities at the same level of employment but provide little support for mobility away from entry level employment. The division between skill and knowledge introduces a longstanding debate over the implications of dividing skill from knowledge and vocational from academic training.

Vocational and Academic Divisions

Academy courses provide students with a 'new' form of training that appeals to their interests and desires and also meets the needs of industry. But by addressing the interests and needs of working class students through direct relevance and connection to economic advantage and the real world, it
may be argued that academy programmes have covertly gained the consent of students to allow industry to reproduce social divisions (Gaskell, 1991; Hickox & Moore, 1990).

Academy programmes have been set up within working class schools to appeal to working class students who will generally move from school to the workforce rather than further study. Previous experience of education has a profound impact on a student's decision to enrol in an academy programme. Many academy students claimed that their previous teachers had not supported nor assisted them and for various reasons such as lack of relevance or interest, academy students have not had 'good' experiences of academic schooling (Hollands, 1991).

Academy students have previously 'switched' off to academic subjects as they claimed that mainstream programmes were not relevant and did not prepare them for the workplace. Therefore, these students were seeking education and training that is relevant, practical and will provide appropriate skills in order to gain employment. As one student stated in a focus group, classes such as general science did not prepare him for his future employment: "It's better than the other subjects and other things you are doing like science. I mean it's dumb. How are you going to use making hokey pokey to be a mechanic?" (Automotive Academy student, FG 19/08/99). The emphasis of academy programmes on equipping students with skills, attitudes and values to compete in the labour market is in opposition to mainstream academic programmes (Shilling, 1989). Mainstream academic programmes are organised around preparing students for entry into further education not immediate entry to the workforce. The two programmes work in opposition because they are preparing students for different places in the
labour market based on social divisions. As Gaskell comments, some courses “do purport to prepare students for specific places in the labour market, and some purport to prepare them specifically for the workplace, rather than further education” (1991, 73).

The organisers of academy programmes claim that the programmes do not divide vocational and academic learning but allow academy students to take academic subjects in addition to courses within the academy programmes. This brings the discussion to the notion of choice. How does a student choose which educational alternative to take to better their chances of employment? Shilling (1989) claims that a student's choice of subject is based on the value of the subject in the real world. I argue that the students' ability to choose an wholly academic course or a vocational academy course is shaped by both, in this instance, their class experiences and academic level of achievement (Clarke & Willis, 1984).

Class and Choice

There is an array of definitions and approaches to the use of class in sociological discussions but generally class can be described by one of two distinct approaches. Firstly, there is the conventional sociological definition of class that places all those in the same economic situation within the same category (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). It is essentially not difficult to place people into categories of class based on socio-economic status and educational achievement but this approach can be problematic as it can only represent a snap shot in time and not an ongoing, historically changing
process. Alternatively, class can better be described as an historical formation based on social relations and the ever changing patterns resultant in this (Williams, 1983). For this thesis I have adopted the latter definition of class as it places an emphasis on social relationships and historical developments rather than socio-economic status.

An understanding of class through the perspective I have chosen implies that class can be understood as a series of evolving social relations. 'Class is not a static concept. While class groupings can be 'frozen' at particular points in time for the purposes of analysis, classes remain processes rather than categories' (Shuker, 1987, 23). The social relations are therefore constantly evolving, constantly producing and reproducing different forms of social relationships. The difficulty in categorising a class group is highlighted by E. P. Thompson who places emphasis on class as an historical notion. 'I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships' (Thompson, 1968, 9).

My understanding of class is that it shapes a student's attitudes, values, aspirations and choice in their construction of social relationships. This is as true in the context of academy programmes as with any other social aspect. The degree to which a student's social relationships (class) impact upon their involvement in academy programmes is evidenced by the particular choices they make with reference to careers, subjects and training options. The nature of their decisions bears a strong association with their particular views regarding the purpose of education. The majority of students in my study of academy programmes, whose origins could be considered working class, tended to view education in a highly instrumental way (Lareau, 1997).
The resultant choices of working class students in many ways reflect the need for their education to have a material outcome. For example, the key aspiration for the working class students Finn interviewed were ‘the ability, through going to work, of being able to buy things and start bringing money into the home’ (Finn, 1984, 25).

Middle class youth are encouraged to think of education as intrinsically worthwhile as an end in itself. Although working class youth still have aspirations and do actively make choices, those choices are constrained by their particular social realities, in particular the notion that their education must bring about a material benefit; education is a means to an end (Lareau, 1997). Although youth from all classes have an ‘inner bent’ or desire, it is primarily those from a middle class background that are encouraged to think about education as a path towards their ‘existential calling’ or purpose and guidance in careers is towards their particular ‘inner bent’ and desire (Cohen, 1984).

Working class youth see their ideal job as making ends meet (Clarke & Willis, 1984). Anything more than that is usually attributed to a ‘passing flight of adolescent fantasy’ (Cohen, 1984, 119). Finn (1984) also argues that the realities of working class employment aspirations are ‘realistic’. The degree to which the academy students tended to be constrained by their particular social relationships and their particular view of education was evidenced in their questionnaire responses, most markedly to what would constitute their ideal job. One student responded by saying that their ideal job would simply make enough money to pay all the bills at the end of the week. Ninety percent of students who participated in the questionnaire firstly identified future careers that were linked to their participation in academy training and which
could be viewed as traditional working class occupations such as low level office workers and car mechanics. My findings from the students' story revealed that academy students tended to have aspirations and make career choices based on the most immediate instrumental gain as opposed to deferred or intrinsic gratification.

The influence of class on choice is not restricted to the students' initial decision to choose a vocational course over an academic course but my study also indicated that the school and the teachers involved in academy programmes direct students through various forms of advice, encouragement and strongly worded suggestions towards 'suitable' employment options (Gaskell, 1985). The students comply as they are directed to see that what they are taking is in their best interest. As Gaskell (1985) argues, this is problematic for social theory as it subordinates the role of individual consciousness to that of social structure, as in the organisation of the school. In a choice of academy programme or supporting subject, students would be directed by the organisation of the school's curriculum and class. This understanding of choice appeared to be applicable to the majority of academy students and can therefore be used to generalise the experiences of most academy students. There was, however, a small group of students whose career choices could not be interpreted by this approach. These exceptions will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.
School and Choice

Using my findings I will argue that the process used by the school to allow students to choose alternative subjects that support their academy subject is restrictive and reinforces class divisions. By electing subjects that are closely tied to their vocational academy course students are effectively opting out of the mainstream system into a vocational alternative. Choosing optional subjects that are solely reliant on the academy choice means the student cannot gain enough qualifications for entry into a programme relying on senior school qualifications. Whatever position or further education this student can pursue will be based on the outcome of the academy programme not national school qualifications such as School Certificate and Bursary. As the ‘profile of an academy student’ highlighted, these students have little or no formal qualifications before they attend the academy and will often not gain many more whilst completing the academy. As a result, the encouragement of acomplementary course of study for academy courses does not assist students to increase their academic qualifications or overcome any previous difficulties they had with an academic curriculum (Cohen, 1984). What academy programmes do, in fact, is encourage students to reject academic work in favour of vocational alternatives. Those students who do not gain school qualifications such as school certificate will not be able to complete a full course to gain that qualification while they are involved in an academy programme. The programme will steer students away from academic learning even more.

The schools attempt to respond to the movement of students away from academy study is problematic as it presents the covert nature of the
schools curriculum design. The organisation of the senior school curriculum directs academy students to take subjects that support and complement their academy programme. Where an academy student could choose an optional mainstream subject the timetable was organised so that they could only choose from a small number of academic courses but in contrast, select from a much larger number of practical, more vocationally oriented options such as food technology, workshop technology, computer graphics, typing and outdoor education. The academic courses offered by the school in these times were often advanced and beyond the ability and inclination of academy students. The school organised the curriculum so that when a complementary mainstream subjects such as typing or computing was offered, students on the Office academy could choose from that or advanced Bursary level science courses. Few of these students even had the entry requirements to take the course and therefore would not be able to take the academic option even if they desired. When the Outdoors academy had optional sessions they could choose from a complementary course in Physical Education at three different levels or advanced statistics or algebra. The advanced level was yet again Bursary therefore none of the academy students could effectively choose academic courses as optional subjects. Had the school offered these subjects at a lower level, such as school certificate all of the outdoor academy students would have been able to take the course had they so desired. The organisation of the curriculum in this way serves to exclude academy students from academic subjects thus restricting their ability to increase formal school qualifications and reproducing the social divisions required for the labour market.
Mac an Ghaill (1990) in studying schools that have used a similar procedure to divide students between academic and vocational subjects argues that this division could more readily be explained as constrained by students particular social relationships than a more overt attempt to reinforce social divisions. His research found that by simply changing the timetable students could combine academic and vocational programmes at a level that suited their ability. However, the study also found that when the timetable was altered to allow non-academic students to take lower level academic courses it gave the appearance and false understanding to teachers and students that the division between the two streams had been eroded when in fact it had not. The student's choice of subject was still constrained by their class understanding of the value of education. Vocational students would still choose practical, vocationally linked subjects from the main curriculum in preference to academic subjects if the opportunity was available. The result of dividing the curriculum and offering different qualifications is that the school system will produce two different kinds of workers, those with academic qualifications and those with solely vocational thus restricting mobility in the job market.

Summary

In addressing the first research question (How are vocational academy programmes organised?) the story told by the teachers/directors and administrators suggests that academy programmes are organised in a way that is consistent with the new vocational training paradigm. Academy programmes exhibit the three fundamental principles of the new
vocationalism - a high degree of industry influence through direct incursion into the academy programmes curricula, the transmission of attitudes and values consistent with the model of the 'ideal worker' (as exemplified through competency based education (CBE)), and the identification with a new discourse of skill which reorganises the teaching of vocational skills away from a craft based, occupationally specific approach, to prescribed units of competency (unit standards).

By viewing academy programmes through a new vocational lens, it is assumed that these programmes will produce graduates that are trained to meet the needs of the labour market and the new economy and in doing so reproduce the social division of workers required by the labour market. In addressing the second research question (What assumptions underpin of this method of organisation and what are the implications for students and teachers associated with it?) my study revealed that whilst academy programmes direct the majority of students to the lower end of the market, the transmission of transferable and generic skills (through unit standards) actually offers greater employment opportunities and mobility within the confines of the lower end of the labour market, a finding in support of the new vocationalism (Finn, 1984; Gaskell, 1991). My findings, however, also indicate that academy programmes clearly empower a considerable number of students to move beyond both class and labour market restrictions. This finding prompted me to conclude that contemporary interpretations of the new vocationalism do not adequately address several aspects of Malbec High School's academy programmes. Consequently, I argue that an alternative approach to understanding academy programmes, through the new vocationalism, is necessary.
The Students' Story

What is not as apparent in the new vocational literature is a way to explain those students that do not move to the bottom end of the labour market but instead show desire and ability to move into tertiary training or higher level employment. The students story in Chapter Five presented data that could not be explained by the training paradigm of the new vocationalism. There are three anomalies that result from interpreting academy programmes through a new vocational lens. Firstly, the teaching of a discourse of skill defined by industry presupposes that students have no prior knowledge of the workplace and therefore can be moulded by industry to fit the model ideal worker. My findings show that this is not the case in academy programmes as students have work experience through part time employment that restricts the development of the 'ideal worker'. Secondly, the new vocationalism does not provide a way to understand why some students do not conform to the traditional class interpretations of choice. Finally, the new vocationalism does not provide an adequate model through which to understand the changes in student motivation as exemplified through both findings and Sarah's story. I will discuss each of these anomalies by introducing them as areas for further research.

Relationship Between Transition to the Workplace and Prior Knowledge

The division between academic and vocational courses often implies that students that do not learn through an academic mainstream curriculum are lacking various skills and knowledge which have restricted their
accomplishment in the school system (Moore, 1984). Moore (1984) claims that often these courses incorrectly portray students as lacking in the social skills necessary to cope with the transition to work. Students such as academy students often adapt to the challenges of the workplace much faster than their academic counterparts. One reason for this ease in transition comes not from the relationship between vocational courses of study and future careers but from the connection of part time employment and future career options (Finn, 1984).

**Part-time employment**

Students in academy programmes indicated a dramatic increase in their involvement in part-time employment since being on the programme. Before the programme less than ten percent of academy students had part-time jobs. This increased to nearly fifty percent by mid way through the second school term. As explained in the students story, this increase may be representative of the students age and the willingness of senior school students to seek employment. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that this increase is directly due to the reduced homework level required for participation in an academy programme; because students are receiving less ‘homework’ as a result of using a competency based approach to learning means they can work at their own speed in class and therefore have more time to become involved in part-time employment. Another position within this argument could be taken from my earlier analysis of Cohen (1984; 1997) and the moulding of worker attitudes. I would suggest that the process of
empowering students through skilling has led to many of them seeking employment in which to 'try out' their new found skills and abilities.

Involvement in part-time employment is an essential element in the shaping of students' future career options. There are two reasons why part-time employment is significant for academy students (Finn, 1984). Firstly, the students' involvement links their experience of the workplace to various opportunities for future employment. As many of the academy students are already working part-time within the industry that their academy focus is on, the chances of the students gaining employment in that industry following completion of the academy is greatly increased. The employment networks a student creates during a period of part-time employment can be instrumental in gaining full employment upon leaving school (Finn, 1984). Secondly, and more importantly, involvement in part-time employment opens students to the experiences of the labour market. Students learn what is expected of them in the labour market and how the earning of a wage is related to the transfer of performance of tasks. It is this involvement in part-time employment that is instrumental in the academy students' transition to the work environment as it implies that some students will already bring an understanding of the workplace to the academy programmes (Finn, 1984).

The transmission of the skills training adopted by new vocationalists presupposes a particular relationship to the work environment (Finn, 1984). The 'ideal' worker will somehow evolve from moulding and directing a student's training and introduction to work. It is argued by Hollands that this approach to training shows how "vocationalism effectively critiques formal schooling and attempts to reform traditional class identities, while underhandedly seeking to construct a new type of generalized, compliant work
force" (Hollands, 1991, 190). Nearly half of the academy students involved in this study are employed part-time in industries related to their academy programmes and can test out what they are being taught in their vocational training programmes by applying it to real life work situations (Finn, 1984). My findings show that the involvement of academy students in part-time employment is analogous to homework. Although they have less ‘school’ homework in the traditional sense their academy homework is the continuation of their work training outside school hours and in the workplace. Part-time employment therefore is repositioned as an extension of their academy training and allows students to experience the workplace and ‘try out’ and either accept or reject what they are learning in the classroom and also accept or reject participation in that industry as a further career choice.

Class and Career Choice

The second anomaly that emerged from the findings from students that cannot be explained by new vocational literature is career choice. Earlier in the chapter I presented an argument that positioned career choice within class understanding and experience. Though that argument can be used for academy programmes and students generally, it does not adequately explain why twenty percent of academy students have made career choices since being on an academy programme that do not conform to a working class knowledge and approach to education and career choice. If academy programmes had not been established these students would have pursued career options that could be understood by the effects of class on shaping a
students approach to employment and career options (Willis, 1977; Weiss, 1990). This approach argued that working class career choice is shaped by relevance and realism rather than an inner desire (Cohen, 1984; 1997). But some students on academy programmes indicated that since they had been on academy programmes their career choices had changed. Students now intended to travel overseas, take other academy options at this school, or another school, and attend university or teachers colleges of education. It may be argued that these changes are simply due to an adolescent ‘flight of fancy’ (Cohen, 1984; 1997) or part of a national trend for youth to travel overseas following the completion of formal schooling. This finding, however, raises questions as to the legitimacy of class based reasons for choice. These findings cannot be explained through the class argument presented earlier in this chapter as these students have selected careers or destinations that are related to desire, an 'inner bent' or as I have previously argued, 'existential calling' reserved for the middle class (Cohen, 1984; Clarke & Willis, 1984). Could it be that the new vocationalism projects an identity of empowered workers to academy students that is such that it actually motivates and 'empowers' these students to move beyond traditional class restraints of the labour market? There are numerous interpretations of this finding that could be arrived at and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine any further hypotheses. It is simply an area in which further research could be initiated.

Motivational Changes

The third anomaly and perhaps the most significant is the dramatic increase in academy students' motivation for learning, school and
employment. None of the three approaches can provide us with a way to understand this finding. Over fifty percent of students indicated that their feelings towards school and learning had improved since being in an academy programmes. The story of Sarah used in the prologue, however, provided anecdotal evidence that showed the instrumentality of the academy experience in changing her attitude towards learning and employment. Her position changed and she saw the importance of gaining an education and gaining employment. But is it possible to conclude that her motivation and that of other students was triggered through relevance and realism to the workplace. There is a large body of literature that suggests that purposeful learning can be increased when curricula is designed around a student’s interest (Dewey, 1913; Hidi, 1990; Renninger, Hidi & Krapp, 1992; Malone & Lepper, 1987; Rathunde, 1993; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Renninger & Wozniak, 1985; Schiefele, 1991; Tobias, 1995). This literature studies the relationship of interest to adolescent learning and may provide another way to view the ability of academy programmes to change student views of themselves as learners. I have used Sarah's story as the key component of this anomaly for one important reason. Sarah's academy experience was not based on a career choice or future career path. It was chosen because she simply loved sport and through that interest she developed the motivation to seek further employment. The literature surrounding the new vocationalism does not provide an explanation for Sarah as it only interprets interest as related to career choice and therefore this anomaly presents an opportunity for further research.
Summary

The students’ stories indicated experiences of academy programmes that could not be explained sufficiently by the application of the new vocationalism, for example the significant increase in student motivation and enthusiasm for schooling. Addressing the third and final research question (How have students’ experiences of schooling been shaped by academy programmes?) proved more problematic than the previous two. The experiences of some students raised issues outside the scope of my discussion and the consequences for schooling they implied are areas for future research.

Firstly, new vocationalism assumes that there is an understanding that students on academy programmes can be trained and moulded in ways that suit the needs of industry. My findings show that this was not always the case. Many students on academy programmes were already involved in part time work and therefore could ‘try out’ and experiment the ideas and values of industry whilst in the workplace. More interesting still was the fact that there was a dramatic increase in student involvement in part-time employment following participation in an academy programme, however, the degree to which these changes were predicated upon experiences of academy programmes could not be addressed directly in my findings.

Secondly, my findings suggest that the perceived impact of class on career choice may be problematic as twenty percent of students on academy programmes showed career options that were not consistent with the literature presented. Though other social factors may account for this, the aspirations of some students fell outside conventional categories as found in
debates surrounding working class notions of choice. In turn, several other questions are raised - Are these students merely exceptions to the conventional arguments? Is it that these findings point towards some component of academy programmes that subverts barriers implicit in conventional debates surrounding class and the division of academic and vocational schooling? Academy programmes may, in fact, prefigure the integration of academic programmes with vocational courses of study (Spours & Young, 1990).

**Conclusion**

In the first section of this chapter I have argued that academy programmes can be interpreted using the lens of the new vocationalism. I have viewed the academy programmes through two existing approaches or interpretations and have concluded that a third and as yet previously unargued approach is necessary to fully understand and explain the complexities of academy programme design. This approach argues that the new vocationalism, as viewed through academy programmes, produces workers with a degree of mobility within the labour market. As a result of an increase in the breadth of their skills and the transferability of those skills to various employment options academy programmes can provide greater employment opportunities and mobility for students within the constraints of the capitalist labour market. This is evidenced in my findings by the involvement of industry in curriculum development and design to closely align training with industry needs. It is also evidenced by the transference of a new discourse of skill to academy students through competency based education, the currency used
by employers for qualifications and training. In addition, this approach raises questions as to the ability of the new vocational courses to act as vehicles for further empowerment of students beyond the preconceived divisions in the labour market.

The approach I have taken, though, views the new vocational training paradigm and academy programmes as still limiting students due to the reliance on meeting the needs of a capitalist labour market. Academy students may have more opportunities for mobility and employment options nevertheless, those options are still constrained by class approach to career choice and the social divisions required by capitalist production. My findings have shown that most academy students are still inclined to choose careers and optional subjects that will provide instrumental value and the most immediate material benefit.

Although this new interpretation of the new vocational provides for the satisfactory explanation of the majority of academy students’ experiences of training and the labour market it does not address the experiences of all academy students and can only be used as a general interpretation.

The second section of this discussion has highlighted the need for further research as three main anomalies arose when academy programmes are viewed through a new vocational lens. Firstly, the new vocationalism serves to create a new kind of worker that will be more adaptable and mobile in the labour market. In order to do this effectively trainees need to have limited experience in the labour market. Students in academy programmes do not fit this profile of ‘pliable’ novices as many are already involved in part time employment. In fact involvement in academy programmes appeared instrumental in nearly half of the academy students becoming involved in part
time employment. Although my findings suggest a direct causal relationship between enrolment in an academy programme and seeking part time employment further research needs to be undertaken to determine the intricacies of this relationship. Nevertheless, the increased involvement of academy students in part time employment limits the possibility of training students into the ideal worker as they are already experiencing the realities of the employment market.

A second area for further development of research is how to interpret the actions of the significant number of students whose intended career path lies outside working class notions of instrumental training and employment. Where this finding is problematic is in the working class student's identification with middle class aspirations. Nearly twenty percent of students in academy programmes found that after attending the programme for only one and a half school terms their career aspirations had deviated from their initial working class aspirations of fulltime employment to aspirations of further training and overseas travel. This change in intentions cannot be explained by either the new vocationalism or traditional interpretations of class values and choice. Therefore, this anomaly also provides an area to be interpreted through further research.

Finally, the dramatic increase in student motivation for learning, school and employment suggests that other schools of thought may more appropriately provide an understanding for several aspects of academy programmes. The success of teaching students through interest and desire uncovers a whole body of literature that does not connect with the new vocationalism and therefore would need to be investigated. Though improved worker attitudes can be explained through Cohen's approach to the
vocationalism, none of the four approaches encompass the argument surrounding the use of interest as a means of increasing purposeful learning. Investigation of this literature would be another point to initiate a study of academy programmes and may provide an alternative way to view both changes in student career choice and also increases in motivation of students like Sarah. Viewing academy programmes through a new vocational lens also draws the programmes into the contemporary debate surrounding vocational reform, but this is not the only area of debate or study that academy programmes can provide a model for. Several questions are left unanswered and alternative theoretical frameworks may provide a greater and more complex understanding of the implications for academy students. Do all students experience the academy the same way that Sarah did? How did the students involved in this study actually make the transition from school to the workplace? Do academy students achieve the careers they aspire to? These are questions for further study.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Academy Programme Initiatives: A New Beginning?
Questionnaire

Which academy programme are you currently enrolled in?

_____________________________________________________

1. Date of birth _______________________

2. Male ☐  Female ☑

3. Ethnicity  Maori ☐  Pacific Islander ☐  European/Pakeha ☐
   Other ☐ (please specify) _______________________________

4. What were you doing last year?
   □ Was still at school
   □ Was working Full-time (please specify) _______________________________
   □ Was working part-time (please specify) _______________________________
   □ Was on another training course (TOPS etc.)
   □ Was on a Community Wage/dole, DPB.
   □ Other (please specify) ____________________________________________

5. What were you planning to do this year if you had not joined an academy?
   □ Go back to school for another year
   □ Was going to work Full-time
   □ Was going to work part-time
   □ Going to University
   □ Going to Polytech
   □ Going to another training course _________________________________
   □ Hadn't thought about it
   □ Other (please specify) ____________________________________________
6. What qualifications did you have when you started the academy this year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Number of subjects/Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ School Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Sixth Form Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Higher School Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Bursary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ NZQA Unit Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Are you currently employed part time?

❑ Yes. What are you doing? ______________________________________________________
❑ No

8. How did you feel about school before joining the academy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really worthwhile</th>
<th>Waste of time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How do you feel about school now that you are in an academy programme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really worthwhile</th>
<th>Waste of time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. What do you enjoy about the academy?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
11. What do you dislike about the academy?


12. Why did you choose this academy over academies at other schools?


13. Why did you choose to go to this academy over other training course providers (TOPs etc)?


14. What do you want to do at the end of the year?

☐ Get a full-time job
☐ Get a part-time job
☐ Go to University/College of Education
☐ Go to Polytech
☐ Do another academy at this school
☐ Do another academy at a different school
☐ Do a different training course
☐ Go on the community wage/ DPB
☐ Go overseas
☐ Other (please specify)


15. What would your ideal job/career be?


16. Do you think the academy can help you reach this goal?

☐ Yes. If yes, how? ☐ No. If no, why not?
17. What do your parents think about you attending the academy?

☐ Think it is a waste of time.
☐ Good because it keeps me in school for another year
☐ Good because it will help me get a job
☐ Good because it will increase my qualifications
☐ Some of it is good, other parts are a waste of time. (please specify)

☐ Other (please specify) ________________________________

18. What do other students think about you attending the academy?

☐ They are also in academy programmes
☐ They are envious
☐ They think it is a waste of time
☐ They hassle me about it
☐ They think it is great
☐ Other (please specify) ________________________________

What do most of your friends do? ________________________________

19. Do you think your attitude towards learning improved since you've been on the academy programme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much better</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Much worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Do you feel that any changes need to be made to the programme?

21. What do you consider the most important things you have learnt while on the academy programme?
22. Do you think the school should be offering other academy options?

Yes □ No □

If so, what?

23. Do you think that the academy programmes should be fulltime?

□ Yes. If yes, why? □ No. If no, why not?

24. If you had to describe the academy in one word what would that be?